

Dostum made Afghan vice-president

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Ex-Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar Wednesday joined the anti-Taliban alliance which named northern warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum vice president, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported. No comments were immediately available from Mr. Hekmatyar's Hezbe-Islami which has so far remained aloof from the anti-Taliban grouping. The alliance agreed that General Dostum's mainly Uzbek militia would be considered part of the Afghan Armed Forces, the Pakistan-based private news agency said. Mr. Rabbani remains president of the war-torn country while Gen. Dostum, retaining his status as chief of the administration in northern provinces under his control, will work as his deputy. AIP said quoting sources close to Dostum.

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Ghali 'suspends' candidacy

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali decided to "suspend" his candidacy for a second term to enable other African candidates to emerge, the U.N. Security Council president announced Wednesday. Council President Paolo Fauci of Italy told reporters that Mr. Ghali "has indicated to me that he intends to suspend his candidacy for the time being. The council this afternoon underlined the need to have as soon as possible candidates from African member states so it can discharge its responsibilities under the (U.N.) charter," he said after the council wound up a two-hour meeting on the issue. The U.N. Security Council submits its choice of U.N. chief to the General Assembly for election.

French general begins visit

AMMAN (Petra) — The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Jean Philip, arrived in Amman on a three-day official visit during which he will hold talks with Jordanian officials. He was received at Amman airport by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Miral.

Egypt to put Israeli on trial

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt will try an Israeli citizen next week on charges of spying for Israeli intelligence, a move that could further worsen relations between the two countries.

Iran orders million foreigners to leave

TEHRAN (AP) — Nearly one million foreigners working illegally in Iran must leave the country within the next month, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Wednesday. According to a Labour Ministry official, employers in Iran have been given a Jan. 4 deadline to replace foreigners working without a permit. The official, Mostafa Musavi, said unspecified legal action would be taken against companies employing foreign workers without permission after the deadline. The decision is seen as an attempt to reduce the number of Afghans in the country illegally.

Bahrain opens trial of Qataris

MANAMA (AFP) — The trial of two Qataris accused by Bahrain of spying opened on Wednesday in Manama and was adjourned until Dec. 14, officials said. The first session took place today and the trial will start again on Dec. 14," said an official, who asked to remain anonymous. He said the trial would remain in the state security court, whose judgments cannot be appealed.

Economy in better shape than last year, Awad tells Parliament Finance minister formally presents draft budget for 1997 to legislature

By Sa'eda Kilani

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Minister of Finance Marwan Awad said Wednesday that the Jordanian economy was in better shape than last year and Jordan would enjoy better living standards and enhanced investment conditions in 1997.

Presenting the 1997 draft budget of JD 1.916 billion to the Lower House of Parliament, Mr. Awad said inflation was expected to be four per cent in 1997.

He unveiled a government plan aimed at fighting poverty and unemployment and ensuring health insurance for all Jordanians.

Mr. Awad said a "safety and social security net" will contribute to upgrading the living standards of Jordanians, the less fortunate categories in particular. It will be fully in place in six years and will involve all domains: health, information and technology, education, infrastructure and employment.

Seven million dinars

have been allocated for the

net project, the minister

added.

"The net will help expand

the activities of the National

Assistance Fund to

include all needy and poor

people as well as finance

infrastructure projects," Mr.

Awad said. "Less fortunate

categories will be contrib-

uting at a larger scale to

the economic and social

activities in the Kingdom

which will have positive

effect on their incomes."

The minister also antici-

ated a 6.5 per cent econ-

omic growth next year

"after the endorsement of

the trade package which

will be presented to the Par-

liament this session."

The draft budget reflects

an 11.1 per cent increase

over the budget for fiscal

year 1996.

It is an austerity budget in

line with the economic

restructuring programme.

The government plans to

achieve a 2.5 per cent bud-

get deficit by the year 1998,

he said.

In specific budget terms

the deficit is JD56 million

but the actual deficit when

expected foreign assistance

of JD169 million is excluded

from the budget is JD

225 million or 3.9 of the

gross domestic product

(GDP). The corresponding

figure for fiscal 1996 was

JD237 million, or 4.6 per

cent of the GDP.

Jordan's economy grew

by 5.2 per cent in 1996 as

opposed to expectations of

six per cent growth in 1997.

The draft budget envis-

ages total revenues of JD

1,860 million with local

revenues of JD 1,691 mil-

lion and foreign assistance

of JD 169 million.

Total expenditures are

estimated at JD 1,916 mil-

lion with current expendi-

tures of JD 1,481 million —

reflecting an increase of

8.2 per cent over 1996 —

and capital expenditure of

JD 435 million, a boost of

22.1 per cent.

Allocation for govern-

ment subsidies for bread

and other staples as well as

for local wheat production

is estimated at JD 72 mil-

lion in comparison with JD

160 million in actual sub-

sidies in 1996 when the gov-

ernment rechannelled sub-

sidies of wheat to direct

cash compensation of JD

1.28 per month.

No new tax or fees or

increase in existing levies is

planned for 1997, the min-

ister said.

Exports will increase at a

rate of at least 8.8 per cent

"through the opening of

new markets and the expan-

sion of exportation to tradi-

tional markets (such as

Iraq) that were influenced

by the Gulf war," Mr. Awad

said.

Imports will decrease and

the Amman Financial Mar-

ket will register a growth,

he anticipated.

The stock market has

shown a slump this year for

the third consecutive year.

Trading during the first 10

months of this year was JD

181.6 million in compari-

son with JD371.2 million

for the same period last

year, the minister said.

Unemployment has

decreased to 13 per cent.

(Continued on page 7)



Deputies Taher Al Masri (left) and Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh discuss a photograph during a recess of a session of the Lower House of Parliament on Wednesday (photo by Youssef Allan)

Kabariti asks for studies on expanding free zones

ZARQA (Petra) — Prime

Minister Abdul Karim

Kabariti on Wednesday

visited the Free Zones Cor-

poration (FZC) in Zarqa

and announced plans to es-

tablish free zones in other

governorates and areas

close to Jordan's borders.

"The government is seek-

ing to liberalise the national

economy so as to attract

investments and increase

the public savings that can

be used to finance pro-

jects," the prime minister

said at a meeting with Mar-

zouk Al Hadid, the FZC

director, and his senior

assistants.

"The aim of this visit and

meeting is to pave the

ground for a larger meet-

ing to group various FZC

managements and the de-

velopment committee at the

prime ministry to work out

a general framework for

the country's free zones in

the various regions in con-

formity with the present

government's strategy," he

added.

He noted that there had

been overlapping of author-

ities between the FZC and

other government depart-

ments, causing confusion

and difficulties and prob-

lems leading to poor per-

formance.

"The creation of efficient

free zones to compete with

the free zones in countries

around Jordan requires new

legislation and reliable

infrastructure," Mr. Kabari-

ti said.

The prime minister called

on the FZC director and

assistants to prepare docu-

mentation to be submitted

to the development com-

mittee at the prime min-

istry.

Mr. Hadid briefed Mr.

Kabariti on the free zones'

work and problems as well

as probable solutions.

Investors at the Zarqa Free

Zone submitted a working

paper to Mr. Kabariti sug-

gesting ideas that would

address the imbalances and

flaws in the present laws

and regulations governing

the activities and work of

the free zones in Jordan.

Jordan has free zones in

Aqaba, Zarqa, the Queen

Alia International Airport

and Sahab with a total area

of 25,173 million square

metres. They comprise

commercial investment

projects, a free market for

vehicles and industries.

Jordan has Baghdad leadership's assurance over Aqaba — officials

By Natasha Bukhari

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan has

received assurances from

Iraqi Trade Minister

Mohammad Mahdi Saleh,

Mubarak wants U.S. to intervene to stop Israeli 'provocation'

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has said he will ask the United States to intervene to stop Israeli "provocation" and warned that threats of war could have negative consequences.

"There is no need for the war threats because they lead to counter reactions, unless we consider Netanyahu's government a cabinet of war," the Al-Ahram newspaper quoted Mr. Mubarak as saying Tuesday during a visit to Tunisia.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai on Sunday accused the Arabs of "war-mongering" and urged them to tone down their criticism of the right-wing administration of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy, also on Sunday, singled out Egypt as having taken a leading role in the criticism against Israel with the aim of putting pressure on the Jewish state.

Mr. Mubarak said he learned that Mr. Levy would seek U.S. intervention over his latest criticism of Israel, namely a warning that Mr. Netanyahu's policy of expanding Jewish settlements on occupied Arab land could torpedo the peace process.

Reiterating this position in Tunis, Mr. Mubarak said:

"We are the ones who will contact the United States to make Israel respect the agreements and to stop from provocative statements."

He also called for an end to the "war of words."

"The issue of war is very dangerous for all parties. Let's look for peace instead of war, which depletes economies and kills people," Mr. Mubarak said.

"Through the statements of its officials Israel wants Arab countries to adapt themselves to its policies. This is impossible," the Egyptian leader added.

He dismissed the need for an Arab summit now but said one could become necessary if Arab-Israeli peace negotiations reach a dead end.

Egypt, which along with Jordan is the only Arab country to have diplomatic relations with Israel, has become very critical of Mr. Netanyahu's headline stance on peace in recent months.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa met Mr. Netanyahu in Lisbon on Monday on the sidelines of a summit of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and said the encounter was "useful and fruitful."

Mr. Musa said he delivered a message from Mr. Mubarak to Mr. Netanyahu and hoped that strained relations between the two countries would soon improve.

Turkey to continue incursions into Iraq

ANKARA (AFP) — Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan said Wednesday that Turkey would continue with military incursions into northern Iraq to hunt down rebel Kurds whenever necessary.

"Cross-border and hot pursuit operations (inside Iraq) will continue whenever necessary," Mr. Erbakan told reporters, according to the Anatolia news agency.

"Our aim is to get rid of terrorism and provide peace and tranquility," Mr. Erbakan said.

Turkey has been fighting a separatist insurgency led by the outlawed Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) in the country's troubled south-east since 1984.

Since 1986, the Turkish army has been conducting incursions into northern Iraq to destroy PKK bases there.

In the largest incursion, nearly 40,000 Turkish troops supported by tanks and air power entered Iraq in March 1995 and fought the PKK for six weeks.

However, many military analysts question the efficiency of those campaigns as PKK rebels usually pull back to the south at times of incursion to escape clashes, only to return to their posts after the Turkish army withdraws.

Iraq and many other countries of the region and several European states have denounced the Turkish incursions. But the United States, Ankara's closest ally in the West, has extended a limited support to the campaign.

Turkish military aircraft have bombed rebel positions in northern Iraq in past months, but no large-scale incursions have been made.

Casino du Liban reopens with pomp

JOUNIEH (AP) — The glow has returned. The music is on. The fabled Casino du Liban is back alive, a milestone in Lebanon's recovery from the devastation of 15 years of civil war.

The world-renowned Casino, a symbol of Lebanon's prewar glory that succumbed to the fighting, reopened after a seven year closure. President Elias Hrawi and guests inaugurated the club Tuesday. The international jet set was to arrive Wednesday night.

Lebanon hopes the Casino's revival will finally restore the country's place on the tourist map and shed its wartime image as a haven of kidnappers and hijackers.

"This evening, a dream has come true," Mr. Hrawi told the guests Tuesday. "We can proceed with development and reconstruction."

The Casino is the only legal gambling club in Lebanon and a rarity in much of the conservative Arab World, where gambling is forbidden by Islamic law. In its heyday, it was the rich Arabs' playground, an escape from the stringent rules back home.

Mr. Hrawi, who is a Christian, attended a dinner and folklore show Tuesday night with ministers, diplomats and other dignitaries.

Visibly absent from the gala was Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, architect of Lebanon's multimillion dollar reconstruction programme but a Muslim who does not drink, smoke or gamble.

There was no gambling Tuesday. The three gaming halls and a fourth for electronic games open to the public Wednesday night.

Foreigners have unrestricted access to the three halls. A Lebanese must prove an income of more than \$12,000 a year, or 100 times the minimum monthly wage, to be admitted.

A police station outside the compound, a private security detachment inside, together with metal detectors and 24-hour video surveillance provide a secure environment for visitors.

The government hopes the Casino will lure more tourists back to the country that was the Middle East's entertainment hub before the 1975-90 civil war. Before the conflict, the Casino hosted gamblers from around the world and was a stage for international events such as the Miss Europe pageant and dance shows.

The Lebanese privately owned company aspires to make its Casino du Liban the Las Vegas by the Mediterranean.

"We will see a Casino combining Western expertise and innovation, Middle Eastern ambience and Lebanese service and efficiency," promised the club's director-general, Habib Letaif.

Me. Letaif said more than 300 top-of-the-line slot machines and electronic horse race and poker games — "similar to newly installed ones in Las Vegas" — were brought. Also on tap are four restaurants and the "Baccara" nightclub.

The reconstruction cost \$50 million and is expected to attract 3 million people a year when it is completed in 2000.

The theatre and the "Salle des Ambassadeurs" hall, which featured Las Vegas-style shows in the pre-war years, will be rebuilt. A 200-room hotel and children's recreation are planned.



Lebanese President Elias Hrawi (third from left) with his wife Mona (second from left) and Foreign Minister Fares Bourez (right) attend the official opening of the famed Casino du Liban on Tuesday (Reuters photo)

Lebanese President Elias Hrawi (third from left) with his wife Mona (second from left) and Foreign Minister Fares Bourez (right) attend the official opening of the famed Casino du Liban on Tuesday (Reuters photo)

U.S. starts evacuating Kurds from northern Iraq to Guam

DIYARBAKIR (AFP) — The U.S. evacuation of nearly 4,500 people from northern Iraq, most of them Kurdish aid workers and their families, started on Wednesday through southeast Turkey, witnesses said.

They said the first group of evacuees, in the third and largest such U.S. operation since Iraqi troops made an incursion into Kurdish-held northern Iraq in late August, entered Turkey at the sole crossing point of Habur.

Among them were "important agents who worked with the Americans," informed sources said.

They were to be flown by helicopter to Batman, 200 kilometres from the border, and will leave for the U.S. territory of Guam in the Pacific starting on Friday, the sources said.

The others are expected to spend several days at Silopi, near the Iraqi border, for identity checks before being transferred to Batman. The whole operation is to take between 10 and 15 days.

In Guam, the Iraqi Kurds will be given the necessary documentation to enter the U.S. mainland.

"We are helping with this evacuation on humanitarian grounds, as in the two previous operations," Turkish Foreign Ministry Spokesman Omer Akbel told reporters in Ankara.

In September, U.S. authorities airlifted about 2,140 Kurds who worked for the U.S. government.

These Kurds were working for humanitarian organisations in north Iraq within the framework of the allied "Provide Comfort" operation aimed at providing aid and protection to Iraqi Kurds. An additional 600 Kurdish opposition activists were evacuated in October to protect them from reprisals by Iraqi agents.

U.S. officials maintain that Iraqi agents are operating in northern Iraq and have targeted Kurds linked with the U.S. government. But there has been no mention of any further evacuations, Turkish officials said.

Baghdad is preparing to resume oil exports for the first time since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, mostly through a pipeline linking Iraqi Kurdistan and Turkey.

Iraqi troops in August helped a Kurd faction led by Massud Barzani oust his rivals from the Kurdish "capital" of Erbil.

Sudanese parliament adopts press law

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The National Assembly, or parliament, has adopted a new press covering the press, printing and publishing in Sudan, the official daily Al Sudan Al Hadith reported Wednesday.

The law calls for a 21-member press council — seven members appointed by the head of state, five by the national assembly, seven to be elected by journalists, and two by printing houses.

The council will issue licences, keep a register of journalists and hold examinations for trainee journalists as well as accredit foreign newspapers and news agencies operating in the country.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Assad receives Jordanian ambassador

DAMASCUS (Petra) — Syrian President Hafez Assad Wednesday received the credentials of Jordanian Ambassador to Damascus Nasouh Majali. Mr. Assad also met with Mr. Majali in the presence of Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Sharaa and relayed his greetings to His Majesty King Hussein and the Jordanian people.

Andorra thanks Netanyahu for putting it on map

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave Andorra an unexpected boost in tourism when he said the principality between France and Spain was a possible model for a future Palestinian entity. "You've put us on the international map," Israeli newspapers quoted President Marc Forné as telling Mr. Netanyahu. Last month, Mr. Netanyahu suggested the Palestinians could live in a self-governing entity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, similar to the U.S. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or the demilitarized enclave of Andorra. The Palestinians aim to establish an independent state, but Mr. Netanyahu opposes the idea. The Yediot Ahronot newspaper reported Wednesday that Andorra received a wave of publicity in the wake of Mr. Netanyahu's comparison, and that tourists have expressed a greater interest in visiting the 170-square-mile enclave with 48,000 residents. Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Forné met earlier this week at a security summit in Lisbon, Portugal.

Iranian president to visit Turkey

ANKARA (AP) — Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani will pay an official visit "possibly before the end of the year," a foreign ministry spokesman said Wednesday. Spokesman Omer Akbel did not elaborate during a briefing with reporters. Turkey's Islamic government has sought to strengthen ties with Iran since coming to power in June.

Palestinian city shuns Toulon

JENIN (AFP) — The Palestinian self-rule town Jenin dropped plans to become a sister-city with Toulon, the French Mediterranean port run by the fiercely anti-immigrant National Front, an official said Wednesday. Jenin Mayor Walid Abu Mweis told AFP his town had considered the link-up with Toulon after the Israeli city of Herzliya broke off its own "sister city" relationship with the French municipality for "anti-Semitism." "We didn't know about the right-wing tendencies of the Toulon government, especially those calling for the expulsion of Arabs from France," Mr. Abu Mweis said. Toulon has been run since June 1995 by the extreme-right National Front, led in the city by Mayor Jean-Marie Le Chevallier. The sister-city idea brought criticism from the Palestinian local administration ministry, which oversees the self-rule municipalities, and a cry of outrage from Arabs in France. But Palestinian sources said it was an angry phone call to Jenin from the PLO representative in Paris which put the coup de grace to the idea. "We just wanted to show our appreciation for France's supportive position in the Palestinian issue," Mr. Abu Mweis said. "When we found out Toulon was under the National Front we stopped the idea." Sources in the Jenin municipality said Franco-Palestinian organisations had begun suggesting other, "non-rightwing" French cities to take up as a sister.

Christians fear nun's dream of quake warning

CAIRO (AP) — Rumours stemming from a nun's dream that the Virgin Mary warned a terrible earthquake would take place Wednesday sent many in Egypt's Christian community running for cover. "Of course I was scared. Everyone was talking about it in our building and on our street," said Narmine Khazam, a 22-year-old Coptic Christian and a university graduate. "We're waiting to see what happens." The Al-Akhar daily said rumours circulated that a nun in Old Cairo dreamed that the Virgin Mary told her an earthquake on Wednesday would strike a quarter of Egypt's population and half of Israel's. The rumours prompted many to take refuge in monasteries for protection, while churches held special masses, the paper said. The head of the geophysics center in Helwan, south of Cairo, dismissed the rumours as baseless. Christians make up an estimated 10 per cent of Egypt's population, or about 6 million. One of the oldest communities in Christendom, its first adherents were converted by St. Mark.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Iris — The Happy Professor & Ovide & the Gang
14:35 Out of This World (comedy)
15:00Covington Cross
15:30Feature: "The Tender"
17:00News Flash
17:02Continuation of Film
17:30Le Monde Est a Vous
19:00Le Journal
19:15 Magazine — Atoms Crochus
19:30News Headlines
19:35Pacific Station (Comedy)
20:00American Chart Show
20:30Material World
21:00Kung Fu
22:00News in English
01:25 Feature: "She'll Take Romance"

PRAYER TIMES

04:54Fajr
06:16Sunrise (Doha)
11:26Dhuhr
14:12Asr
16:36Maghreb
17:58Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Amman International Church Tel. 827126
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Rainfall is expected at intervals over the weekend, with skies cloudy to partly cloudy. Temperatures are expected to dip slightly and winds becoming south-westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be southerly moderate and seas rough.

Amman08/15
Aqaba13/23
Deserts07/17

Jordan Valley13/23
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 17, Aqaba 24 Humidity readings: Amman 52 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Mazharah820425
Dr. Wissam Hazyain748563
Dr. Munther Al Qatani779959
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayim630115
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Al Salara pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Nairoukh pharmacy623672
Najib pharmacy647632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh250080
Al Quds pharmacy(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Salah Safarini987565
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue634341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Company636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre813813/32
Khalidi Maternity644281/6
Aklieh Maternity642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131

University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital667279
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali664104/6
Italian, Al-Muthajreen777101/5
Al-Bashir775111/26
Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital622405/0
Amul Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital0983323
Zarqa National Hospital09890560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)86732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital09990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital02275555
Greek Catholic Hospital02272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital02247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital03314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified.
Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08 (53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15Sanaa (RJ)
08:15Bombay (RJ)
09:15Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:45New Delhi (RJ)
10:05Muscat, Dhahran (RJ)
10:05Beirut (RJ)
10:30Jeddah (add) (RJ)
10:30Colombo (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:25London (RJ)
16:40Casablanca (RJ)
17:35Moscow (RJ)
18:10Athens (RJ)
18:20 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (add) (RJ)
19:05Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
19:25Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:40Rome (RJ)

Other Flights

11:00Doha (Q7)
12:40Doha (GF)
13:30Riyadh (SV)
14:10Sharjah (AH)
15:15Damascus (Q7)
16:15Dubai (EK)
20:10Beirut (ME)
20:35Cairo (MS)
21:40Tel Aviv (LY)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
04:00Jeddah (add) (RJ)
06:20Beirut (RJ)
07:15Moscow (RJ)
11:05Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:30Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
11:30Rome (RJ)
12:00Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:10Paris (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
12:20Athens (RJ)
20:20Larnaca (RJ)
20:30Jeddah (RJ)
21:30Cairo (RJ)
22:00 Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ)
22:15 Abu Dhabi, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
23:50Jakarta (RJ)
23:55Bahrain, Doha (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

06:00Istanbul (TK)
07:35Beirut, London (BA)
07:45Beirut (ME)
11:45Damascus (Q7)
13:30 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
15:00Algiers (AH)
15:00Riyadh (SV)
16:00Doha (Q7)
17:15Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:25Cairo (MS)
22:50Tel Aviv (LY)
02:30Amsterdam (KL)
04:35Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:20Aqaba (RW)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple700/500
Banana550/550
Banana (imported)850/550
Cabbage80/40
Carrot240/150
Cauliflower140/80
Cucumber (large)100/80
Cucumber (small)180/140
Eggplant120/60
Garlic750/550
Grapes500/250
Grape fruit200/150
Lemon360/200
Marrow (large)80/40
Marrow (small)150/100
Onion (green)200/120
Onion (dry)170/80
Orange550/480
Pear620/500
Pepper (hot)250/150
Pepper (sweet)250/150
Potato320/180
Spinach160/100
String Bean400/300
Tomato160/100

Home News

Teachers' group seeks legitimacy

By Christina Schlegl
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The controversial issue of establishing a teacher's professional association in Jordan seems to have come to an end, according to Sahry Masoud member of an ad hoc teacher committee.

According to Mr. Masoud, the majority of his committee has agreed upon the need to establish a union comprised of voluntary members in lieu of a professional association.

"The teacher's committee has decided to form a union with voluntary, and not obligatory, membership," Mr. Jaradat told the Jordan Times Monday.

Moreover, he said, the panel does not intend to lobby for a renewal of legislation, but rather by laws, as the committee respects the constitution and would halt "any ideas [which] reject [the law]."

The rebuff to formally institutionalise a teachers' association was rejected by the Higher Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution in 1993 due to "non-conformity with the constitution" and the decision was reasserted in June of 1994, when the same council decided that teachers employed by the Ministry of Education have no right to establish their own association.

The Constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan deems that teachers are defined as government employees and therefore, the reasoning goes, it is incumbent upon the government to provide for its workers.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Secretary General of the Ministry of Education Izzat Jaradat stated that after the Council's decision the teacher's union draft was effectively frozen.

"Two years ago, a teachers' committee was formed, without the Ministry's sanction, by various educators coming from leftist, rightist and national movements who, once more, pushed towards the implementation of a formal association," Dr. Jaradat stated.

In order to accommodate the teachers' request, the ministry formed an exploratory committee to procure a legal manner of establishment of such an association, he continued.

In the end, the committee was unable to determine a means to establish the committee which would not interfere with governmental jurisdiction as defined by the Constitution.

During the process, the panel suggested a change in the form of request from a professional association into a teachers' union with voluntary membership and by-laws.

Establishing a teachers' union with by-laws would mean that these can be repealed at any time by the Cabinet, whereas formal legislation must be accepted by Parliament and thus cannot be repealed, Dr. Jaradat explained.

A year ago, he continued, the Ministry again suggested the union's establishment with by-laws, as suggested by the exploratory committee, however this was rejected by teacher committee representa-

tives.

"The ministry has done its part, now it is up to the teachers to find a decision which conforms to a legal framework," Dr. Jaradat said.

He concluded that the ministry will continue to support the teacher committee's goal as long as it strengthens teacher communication, serves the goal of educational improvement and teacher needs.

According to Mr. Masoud, in the meantime, the teachers' committee has commenced upon a new draft for the formation of a teachers' union in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

He further declared that the panel accepted the draft on the condition that union membership not be mandatory for teachers. A voluntary membership might be a less powerful voice for the union as membership would be limited and less fees would be received in addition to the already mentioned by-laws falling under the Cabinet's jurisdiction.

Although Mr. Masoud denied that the amount of teachers participating in the disputed union would be of little importance. There are more than 60,000 teachers in the Kingdom, forming one-third of the working population, which would translate into a very strong professional association, if a mandatory membership was instituted.

According to both the Ministry of Education and the teachers' committee, the government supports the idea of establishing a union.

Criminal lab confirms Masri children poisoned with cyanide

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A pathologist testifying in the case of a 34-year-old father, accused of murdering his two children in September, Wednesday confirmed that the two children did, indeed, die of respiratory failure induced by cyanide poisoning.

Head of the National Institute of Forensic Medicine Mo'men Hadidi, told the Criminal Court that, on Sept. 11, he performed an autopsy on Hanin, nine, and Hani, six, and determined that the two had died of respiratory failure caused by brain malfunction.

"I gathered blood, intestine, and liver samples from both children and sent them to the criminal lab, who, a week later, confirmed finding cyanide salt in the blood samples," Dr. Hadidi told the court.

According to the pathologist, an average of 300 milligrammes of cyanide per blood litre is a sufficient dose to kill an adult in two to nine minutes after consumption.

"Lab results indicted finding 500-600 milligrammes per blood litre of cyanide salts in the children's blood which caused intensive damage to the stomach region and caused their swift death," Dr. Hadidi said.

He added that when the cyanide salts interact with stomach acid, chemical reactions occur forming cyanide acid which, he said, is extremely toxic and can cause instantaneous death.

Cyanide, a difficult substance to obtain, is used for insecticides, photograph developing, creating paints, metallurgy, hardening iron and steel, electroplating and concentrating of ores and in gold and silver refining.

Mr. Masri, who confessed to poisoning his two children on Sept. 11, pleaded not guilty last week to the charges pressed against him by the Criminal Court prosecutor, which included two counts of premeditated murder and three counts of attempted murder, claiming that his confessions were fabricated.

Moreover, Dr. Hadidi told the court that he conducted a general examination on Mr. Masri on Sept. 25 and found that he was mentally stable.

Mr. Masri had told the court on Nov. 30, upon entering a plea of not guilty, that "all of my confessions were a fantasy of my own mind, and I will state my reasons for these false statements when the time is right."

Following the conclusion of the 90-minute court session, Attorney Najdawi told the Jordan Times that "Mr. Masri was subjected to all kinds of duress which forced him to confess to

something he did not do."

"My client, who was mentally anguished from his children's loss, told me that he is planning to testify that he invented the story to rid himself of the continual mental and physical stress he endured while under questioning," Mr. Najdawi said.

He said that there are other issues Mr. Masri is preparing to tell the court "when the time is right."

Mr. Masri told authorities on Sept. 25 that he killed his two children by giving them two cyanide pills he had purchased from Canada, because of financial constraints, family problems and jealousy as his children favoured their mother over him.

The two children were found dead by their mother in their Abu Oneizah Housing Complex apartment in Shmeisani on the morning of Sept. 11. They were left alone in the flat after their

mother went to give their father a ride to his work at 6:45 a.m.

The court tribunal postponed the case until Dec. 17 to hear four of the prosecution witnesses.

Meanwhile, in the case of former honorary council in Jordan, Tawfiq Abu Khajil, who is accused of a baby sale scam involving Sri Lankan domestic workers, the Criminal Court Wednesday heard one of the last two witnesses in the case.

Formal charges pressed against Mr. Abu Khajil include: use of forged documents, issuance of false certificates, sale of babies (illegal under a 1929 law against slavery), possession of unlicensed firearms, importing illegal wireless devices, abuses of trust and forgery of a government seal.

The Criminal Court set Dec. 17 to hear the last defence witness in the case.

Government, radio and television reach tentative administrative independence accord

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — As a first step of a grand manoeuvre aimed at establishing a totally independent body, the government has announced that an agreement in principle was reached to grant Jordan Radio and Television Corporation (JRTC) administrative independence.

According to Minister of Information Marwan Muasher, a final agreement between the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Finance over the new status of the national broadcasting corporation should be finalised "within a month."

Administrative independence, defined as the power to autonomously reinvest advertisement and other revenues in modernisation plans, was previously stipulated by the corporation's current law but heretofore never implemented.

Until a final agreement to fully implement the current law is ratified, all of JRTC's revenues will continue to go to the Treasury.

Stressing the strain of growing competition

imposed by numerous emerging satellite stations, Jordan Television (JTV) Director Nasser Judeh said that an "administrative independence will allow JTV to confidently enter the 21st century."

Under its new status, JTV will be able to invest in more advanced equipment, higher technology, new programmes and overall human resources, Dr. Judeh told the Jordan Times.

Subsequent to administrative independence, a draft law currently before Parliament and slated for approval stipulates political independence for the JRTC.

The draft law, which will "hopefully be approved in the current Parliament session," envisages the complete transformation of the JRTC into a totally independent body, "governed by a board of directors," Dr. Muasher said.

As a transitional phase towards total political independence, the 15-member board of directors will include seven members appointed by the government and eight members, including the chairman, representing the private sector.

As for financial independence, defined as the

corporation's capability of self-funding, officials do not seem to see it as a target achievable in the near future.

"Though entitled to make financial decisions autonomously, the JRTC will still depend on government funds for at least the first few years [after the passage of the law granting political independence]," Dr. Muasher admitted.

"The ultimate objective is the progressive decreasing of governmental financial support," said Director General of the Budget at the Ministry of Finance Abdul Rahman Ajlouni, adding that "[such a target] will not be achieved in the near future."

According to the Ministry of Finance, the 1997 projected budget for the JRTC should near JD 28 million, registering an increase of six per cent as compared to the 1996 budget.

On the other hand, JRTC's revenues are estimated to total around JD 6 million, Mr. Ajlouni said.

'Costa Rican meeting focuses on ozone'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzak Tubeishat

described a Jordanian delegation to meetings held last week in Costa Rica, regarding the preservation of the ozone layer, as calling on industrialised nations to honour commitments in helping Third World countries substitute materials harmful to the ozone with ozone-friendly substances.

Speaking upon his return to Amman, the minister noted that in past years, the decline in funding of such projects has adversely impacted the economies of Third World countries, effectively preventing their implementation of projects aimed at protecting the ozone.

The ozone layer is a protective layer surrounding the earth, which shields the earth from hazardous quantities of ultraviolet radiation, and is thinning due to usage of chlorofluorocarbons, chlorine, bromine and other

residues produced by pollutant factors.

The minister explained that "advanced nations created the 'Montreal Fund' in 1987 in order to provide financial assistance to developing nations and end usage of substances detrimental to the ozone, by the year 1999."

In his address, Dr. Tubeishat outlined Jordan's contributions towards the protection of the ozone layer, noting that work is underway to carry out four environmental and ozone-protective projects in the next three months.

The project, he said, would reduce the total utilisation of deleterious substances by 25 per cent and Jordan hopes to carry out other projects in the next two years reducing ozone-degrading substances by 45 per cent.

Dr. Tubeishat also described national media campaigns aimed to increase public awareness about environmental protection.

Last October, the minister

attended a meeting in Montreal where donors promised \$500,000 to four Jordanian firms in order to commence utilisation of ozone-friendly substances in manufacturing processes and replace substances considered harmful to the ozone.

By September of 1996, Jordan had received a total of \$2.5 million from the \$50 million pledged by donor nations to implement plans directed towards general environmental protection, including that of the ozone layer.

Auxiliary to the meeting in Costa Rica, Dr. Tubeishat stated that he met with United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) representatives and briefed them on the projects financed by the \$2.5 million sum.

He also met with representatives of the World Bank to discuss environment-related projects.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CHRISTMAS CHOIR
* Performance by the Amman Community Choir Band of the Young Women's Christian Association at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL
* Two films entitled "Le Visiteurs" and "La Soif de l'Or" at Cinema Philadelphia respectively on Thursday and Friday at 8:30 p.m.

FILMS
* "La Casa de Los Espiritus" at Instituto Cervantes Jabal Amman on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.
* "Davinci: Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian" (with commentary in Arabic by Adnan Al Sharif) at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

CHARITY BAZAAR
* Annual Christmas bazaar at the Orthodox Club, Abdoun on Thursday and Friday (11:00 a.m. — 10:00 p.m.)

CHRISTMAS SHOW
* Special show and sale of Christmas crafts at the Jordan Crafts Centre (Alaydi), Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 644555), until Dec. 31.

SEMINAR
* Seminar on plastic art with the participation of Mohammad Al Amiri and Mohammad Al Marzouq at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITION/SALE
* Exhibition/Sale of antiques, crafts, old engravings, photographs, old maps and cartography of Jerusalem and the holy land at Um Al Kundum, airport road, off the Arabian House Club on Friday (11:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.)

Japan, Jordan sign water pact

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) along with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation Wednesday signed an agreement stipulating the provision of designs and project supervision intended to boost the efficiency of the Zai Water Pumping Station which provides 45 million cubic metres (mcm) of water to Amman.

The project, which is to be financed through a JD 12 million Japanese grant to Jordan, is slated to commence in April 1997 and reportedly will take one year to complete.

Also Wednesday, the two sides signed minutes of deliberations of meetings held between JICA and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation on boosting the capacity of the pumping stations between Deir Alla in the Jordan Valley and Zai, west of Amman.

The agreement will be implemented between 1997 and 2001, once the minutes have been approved by the Japanese government, and stipulates an annual increase in the capacity of pumped water from 45 mcm to 90 mcm.

Ministry Secretary General Qusay Qleishat and JICA Representative Haru Iwahori signed the agreement.

Subsequent to the signing ceremony, Mr. Qleishat said that the project entails replacing water pumps in the stations between Deir Alla and a water plant at Zai.

Union decries violence against women

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordanian Woman's Union (JWU) joined hands with international organisations in condemning violence against women and calling for national and international action to end such practices.

In a statement, issued by the JWU, on the occasion of their sixth annual campaign entitled "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence 1996, Bringing Women's Human Rights Home: Realising Our Vision," the union urged the concerned authorities to end all forms of violence and discrimination against women.

"Domestic, social, cultural, legal, economic, physical and political violence against women in our society is continuous and historical," the JWU statement said.

The statement called on all organisations and institutions to join together to fight this phenomenon, and upon the government to implement all U.N. agreements and decisions to end all forms of violence and discrimination against women.

The 16-day campaign, which started on Nov. 25, commenced in 1991 with the intention of highlighting women's activism against various modes of violence.

According to a recent study, prepared by the Public Security Department and included as part of Jordan's official paper presented at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing last September, there were 9,656 cases of domestic physical battery registered in police stations around the Kingdom, between the years of 1989 and 1992.

There were no recent studies provided concerning domestic abuse.

During the past 10 years, however, a total of 236 women were reported killed in Jordan in what are termed as "crimes of honour."

However, a 1996 survey conducted by the Department of Statistics in cooperation with the International Centre for Social and Applied Studies and Research, International Development Research of Canada (IDRC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), showed that other forms of domestic inequality are widely and routinely practiced.

The survey, conducted on a sample of people (aged between 15 and 75) in Jordan, indicated that 12.2 per cent of women were forbidden from visiting their neighbours alone; 27.2 per cent were forbidden from going to the market alone; 30.9 per cent were forbidden from visiting relatives, who lived in the same city, alone; 65.8 per cent were forbidden from visiting relatives in neighbouring towns unaccompanied; 33.1 per cent were forbidden from visiting doctors alone; 83.6 per cent were forbidden from visiting relatives in other countries alone and 88.4 per cent were forbidden from studying abroad.

Furthermore, the survey, which was last week published in the daily column of Fahd Al Fane's in Al Ra'i newspaper, said that of those employed in the Kingdom, 60.8 per cent are males and 11 per cent are females.

The survey also stated that only 1.5 per cent of women have land registered in their name.

Moreover, in the Kingdom a woman cannot legally obtain a passport nor marry without her husband's, father's or in the case of unavailability or death, a male relative's permission.

Nor, according to JWU President Asma Khader, can a Jordanian woman, who is married to a non-national, obtain citizenship for her husband, although a Jordanian male married to a non-national may apply for citizenship for his wife.

The children of a marriage, in which the wife is Jordanian and the man is not, are not legally considered Jordanian citizens, whereas in the reverse case, children are entitled to full nationality and all rights therein included.

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Serbia cracks down on media, protests roll on

BELGRADE (Agencies) — Serbia ignored Western criticism and closed an independent Belgrade radio station Tuesday to halt live reports of daily opposition demonstrations against President Slobodan Milosevic.

Radio B-92 said its transmitter was switched off and the Communications Ministry ordered it to stop broadcasting.

The move indicated Mr. Milosevic was taking an increasingly tough line with the opposition at the risk of fuelling the popular outrage behind a wave of daily demonstrations.

Some 80,000 students and opposition supporters marched through the streets of the capital again Tuesday in a protest against election rigging by the ruling Socialists.

A student radio station, Radio Index, was also knocked off the air as the protest began. The radio, which operates with the permission of authorities, later managed to resume broadcasting but with a weaker signal.

The crackdown on B-92, one of a handful of independent radio stations in Serbia, came despite earlier Western appeals to protect press freedom.

A spokesman for the ruling Socialist Party dismissed growing criticism from the United States and European countries over Mr. Milosevic's handling of the crisis.

"We regard the question of elections as an internal matter, and are behaving correspondingly," Ivica Dacic, quoted by the state

Tanjung news agency, said. He said the opposition had always been allied with Serbia's critics and "had taken part in demonising this country."

The U.S. State Department called the local elections last month "a sham" after Mr. Milosevic denied the Zajedno (Together) Coalition of opposition parties victory in the capital and other cities.

State-controlled media has branded the opposition supporters as "fascists" trying to stir up violence.

While foreign television crews beam footage of the street protests around the world, much of the country can only learn of events by word of mouth and a few independent newspapers.

Five Supreme Court judges joined opposition to Mr. Milosevic Tuesday, accusing their colleagues of being politically subservient.

The judges' revolt in letters to the opposition daily Nasa Borba (Our Struggle), was the first sign of a crack in the machinery of state over which Mr. Milosevic has maintained a tight grip during nine years of authoritarian government.

Serbian courts rubber-stamped Socialist claims of unspecified "irregularities" in the elections to clear the way for fresh ballots which the Socialists claimed they won.

The authorities have moved in hundreds of police to Belgrade and other towns where protests have been taking place, but they have refrained from intervening so far.

With no sign of the demonstrations flagging and international criticism growing, Mr. Milosevic was looking for a way out of the crisis to save face, diplomats said.

Charges of poll fraud and the subsequent demonstrations have severely damaged the Serbian leader just as he was trying to rehabilitate his image with Western powers.

The United States warned Mr. Milosevic that his refusal to recognise the result of the elections strengthened its resolve to keep the remaining U.N. sanctions against Belgrade.

These deny Serbia access to foreign credits it needs urgently to rebuild its ruined economy.

Yugoslavia's decision to close the only radio stations covering opposition protests has been condemned as an "act of war on press freedom" by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).

"In reality, the Milosevic regime has demonstrated clearly what independent journalists have known for years — it is a government of censorship with contempt for press freedom," said IFJ Secretary General Aidan White.

"At a time when the people of the former Republic of Yugoslavia are taking to the streets to reclaim their democratic rights, the government of Milosevic has shown its true colours to the international community."

"It is fundamental that Western governments respond vigorously."



Foreign media gather at the press conference in Belgrade's independent Radio B-92 after authorities shut off the station in Belgrade Tuesday. B-92 was the last remaining radio in Serbia covering the mass protests by the opposition claiming that the authorities stole its election victory (Reuters photo)

Algerian forces kill rebels, attack hideouts

PARIS (R) — Algerian security forces shot dead 12 Muslim fundamentalists hiding in rocks in the Sahara desert as troops near Algiers blasted their way to mountain hideouts of other rebels, Algerian newspapers said Wednesday.

Liberte newspaper said the 12 slain near the Saharan town of Ghardaia followed a long manhunt for the killers of 38 people dragged from a bus and other vehicles in October at a fake roadblock mounted by fundamentalists.

Many of the civilians killed then had their throats cut and were mutilated. Liberte, quoting a security

source, said troops, gendarmes and local community guards surrounded the hideout near Ghardaia, 450 kilometres south of Algiers.

They were met by a hail of gunfire from the rebels, who were well entrenched in the rocks. The operation, which started Sunday, finished late Tuesday.

"On their arrival at Ghardaia town, the vehicles carrying the terrorists' bodies were literally besieged by around 300 local people, a population which still keeps in its memory the evils of these criminals," the paper said.

El Watan newspaper, usually well-informed on secu-

rity matters, reported Wednesday that security forces had for several days mounted an intense manhunt in mountainous areas round Larbaa, Sidi Moussa and Chrea near Algiers.

"The explosions heard by inhabitants of these regions were caused by mines planted by terrorists to safeguard the roads" leading to their hideouts, the newspaper said, adding that defusing the mines had gone on for two days.

"From Sidi Moussa up to the exit from Chrea, the security forces moved in to dislodge nearly 50 terrorists, split into small groups of up to 10 people and lying

in ambush in the mountains and orchards."

It said several guerrillas had been arrested and arms caches seized, including about 30 bombs which were blown up on the spot.

Algerian security forces have been locked in conflict with fundamentalists for the past five years during which about 60,000 people have died.

The violence erupted shortly after the authorities in January 1992 cancelled a general election in which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had taken a commanding, first round, lead. The FIS has since been banned.

Taliban resist attacks on north Kabul frontlines

KALAKAN, Afghanistan (Agencies) — Despite several infantry attacks and heavy shelling from rival factions, the Taliban militia kept their grip on frontline positions north of Kabul, witnesses said here Wednesday.

"They launched two strong attacks against us yesterday (Tuesday), one early morning and again in the afternoon," frontline Taliban fighters at Kalakan told AFP.

They said Wednesday was a calm day despite the pop-pop of small-arms fire overhead and artillery fire crashing in front of their position.

The fighters had occupied a large "qala," or traditionally fortified Afghan house, some two kilometres from Kalakan, a small village about 40 kilometres north of Kabul.

The Taliban captured it and the village of Istalif, nestled beneath the snow-capped peaks of the Koh Daman Range of the Hindu Kush Mountains, about 10

days ago. The Taliban's rivals — ex-Kabul government troops under Ahmad Shah Masoud in coalition with northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum's ethnic Uzbek fighters — were dug-in just a few kilometres up the road from Kalakan at the district centre of Qarabagh.

Exchanges of gunfire from both sides, including heavy artillery and anti-tank rockets resulted in at least one casualty, an AFP correspondent witnessed. An Afghan interpreter for a visiting foreign correspondent suffered two minor shrapnel wounds.

One badly hurt Taliban fighter was delivered to a first-aid post to the rear of the frontlines, but he was wounded by a mine, away from the fighting.

Hundreds of civilians fled the fighting on foot, a tide of pitiful humanity heading down the old road (one of the two highways which exit Kabul to the north) for sanctuary in the capital.

The old and infirm struggled to stay atop donkeys, while young children were perched on wheel-barrow carrying household valuables.

There were no reports of heavy fighting on the new road, which runs parallel but through the desert area to the east.

Meanwhile, the Taliban movement told its members Tuesday to relax their harsh treatment of people in the capital Kabul, official Kabul Radio said.

The broadcast, monitored in Islamabad, quoted Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar as telling his followers to "behave with the disturbed citizens of (war-shattered) Kabul so you get Allah's mercy."

He told Taliban members to behave in accordance with Islamic Sharia Law and not to harm or tease residents of the capital.

The radio also quoted another Taliban statement advising the movement's fighters to avoid harsh treatment of citizens, particular-

ly women. The Taliban enforced a strict Islamic code after capturing Kabul in late September from the government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani, ordering women not to come out of their homes without a veil and forcing men to grow long beards and offer prayers in mosques.

The moves aroused worldwide protests from human rights groups. Tuesday's Taliban order for a relaxation coincided with a statement by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) that it would only release funds for education in Afghanistan when the Taliban allowed girls back into schools.

UNICEF is seeking \$10.1 million to boost its aid programme for Afghan women and children, whose situation continues to be "among the worst in the world," according to the agency.

It is among several U.N. agencies taking part in a \$133 million appeal to donor countries launched Tuesday.

U.S. rover blasts off for Mars

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (R) — NASA's first Mars rover was on the road to the red planet after roaring away from its Florida launch pad into a star-filled sky early Wednesday morning.

The Mars Pathfinder probe lit up the cold Florida night with a brilliant trail of flame at 1:58 a.m. EST (0658 GMT) as it blasted off from Cape Canaveral Air Station atop a McDonnell Douglas Corp. Delta 2 rocket.

"Liftoff of the Delta rocket with the Mars Pathfinder spacecraft," said NASA launch commentator George Diller as the rocket climbed away.

Observers at Cape Canaveral watched the 13-storey rocket appear to pass through the crescent moon as it arced toward space.

The Delta 2 carried the probe on the first leg of its 310 million mile (500 million kilometres), seven-

month interplanetary trek to Mars. The spacecraft separated from the third stage of the rocket about 75 minutes after blastoff, 500 miles (800 kilometres) above Hawaii.

"The spacecraft is now on its way to Mars," Mr. Diller said as ground controllers broke into applause.

The launch, originally scheduled for Dec. 2, was delayed first by stormy weather and then by a last-minute ground computer glitch. The rocket's countdown Wednesday went flawlessly and the weather did not interfere.

Pathfinder is to overtake the global surveyor, NASA's first Mars probe of the year, launched Nov. 7, and arrive at the planet on July 4, 1997.

If all goes according to plan, the \$196 million probe will plunge through the thin Martian atmosphere, slow by parachute and bounce to

a safe landing, protected by giant air bags. The Pathfinder's pyramid-shaped lander carries a six-wheeled rover the size of an office laser printer, called Sojourner. It will explore the landing site, beaming back pictures of the surface and sniffing out the composition of rocks.

The rover will be driven by remote control by a team of technicians at NASA's jet propulsion laboratory in Pasadena, California. The drivers will steer the solar-powered vehicle across the rock strewn landscape using virtual reality goggles linked to cameras on the rover and landing station.

Pictures and weather reports from the Martian surface will appear on the Internet daily, creating a "virtual presence" on the planet for computer users world-wide, NASA administrator Dan Goldin said.

Discovery of moon ice is 'holy grail' for those who dream of space colony

WASHINGTON (R) — The possible discovery of ice on the moon may be the "holy grail" for those who dream of moon colonies but some scientists doubt it will dramatically transform human space exploration in the near future.

In fact, despite confident claims from the Pentagon after analysis of data sent back by a military spacecraft, some scientists doubt that there is even ice there.

"There's a community that's very anxious to talk about going back to the moon and living in a colony, they are very passionate about that. One of the keys to that venture is to be able to find water, so those people will be very excited," said John Wood, a scientist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"Personally, I've always been sceptical of that whole proposition. I think it's a lot of wishful thinking. I can contain my enthusiasm," Mr. Wood added.

For those who envision human outposts in space, either for scientific study and exploration or as full-scale colonies, water is essential — not just for

human consumption but for making everything from cement to rocket fuel.

"Water is one of the most valuable strategic materials we can find in the solar system," said Paul Spudis of the Houston-based Lunar and Planetary Institute, and one of the lead researchers on the moon water project.

Mr. Spudis and other scientists working with the U.S. defence department announced Tuesday that the Pentagon's Clementine satellite had found evidence of what appears to be ice in a deep, dark and very cold crater on the south pole of the moon.

The discovery, based on radar signals and mathematical models, must be independently confirmed and several scientists interviewed at observatories and universities around the country said they were sceptical.

Some questioned the assumptions underlying the mathematical models, and some offered other possible theories about moon geography that might match the data.

Even if it does prove to be ice, opinion was mixed on whether it would have practical use for space exploration.

"I think it will be very useful — not in the next decade but a century from now," said lunar researcher Joseph Burns of Cornell University.

Wendell Mendell, a physicist and astronomer at NASA's Johnson Space Centre in Houston, believes that with adequate investment, there could be "a really robust" human presence in space within a decade or two. But he said it is an open question whether ice trapped in a deep remote crater has any practical relevance.

"I am not clear what the impact is on human exploration," Mr. Mendell said. "Even if it's there, how do you exploit it and transport it? And it's non-renewable. If the first person uses it up, the second person doesn't get any."

Gordon Pettengill, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is not certain that the Clementine data does prove ice. But if there is ice, he said, it probably is in large enough quantities to make a difference to humans some day.

"We're not sending a million people to the moon, we'd be sending maybe 10," Mr. Pettengill said.

Rebel military chief to run for Chechenya president

GROZNY (R) — Aslan Maskhadov, chief commander of Chechenya's independence fighters who have humiliated the Russian army, said Tuesday he planned to run in the presidential election expected early next year.

"I have decided I will be a candidate," Mr. Maskhadov, who now heads the Chechen government effectively recognised by Moscow, told reporters outside his office in central Grozny.

Mr. Maskhadov's announcement ends weeks of speculation about whether or not he planned to seek office.

Current leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev and guerrilla chief Shamil Basayev have already thrown their hats into the ring, but observers see Mr. Maskhadov as a strong early favorite.

Moscow's troops, which had failed to crush rebel resistance in 21 months of war, are in the final stages of a pullout from the mountainous Caucasus region.

Russian human rights campaigner Sergei Kovalyov told separatist leaders last week the vote risked being turned into a farce

unless it was postponed to give time to establish valid voting rules and find ways for an estimated 400,000 refugees — nearly half the population — who fled the war, to cast ballots.

But Mr. Maskhadov gave no indication the Jan. 27 poll, which will also choose a local parliament, would be delayed.

"We need to quickly hold elections and the government that is chosen by the people should get down to work," Mr. Maskhadov, clad in a traditional Chechen lamb-wool hat and flanked by armed bodyguards, told Reuters.

He said any delay in the vote would open the door to "provocations."

By late evening Mr. Maskhadov had already opened a campaign headquarters in a run-down four-storey building near Grozny's Minutka Traffic Circle, scene of some of the bloodiest battles of the war with Russia where most of the surrounding multi-storey apartment blocks are destroyed or burnt out.

Mr. Maskhadov said that an attempt to agree on a single separatist candidate in a show of unity was dead.

U.S. military is best in world, despite cuts — Perry

MONTEREY, California (R) — The United States still has the "best damned military forces in the world" despite deep post-cold war budget cuts, Defence Secretary William Perry said Tuesday as he neared the end of a globe-circling trip to Bosnia, the Gulf and Japan.

"Critics used to say that our troops were not smart enough to use high technology. The critics were wrong," he said. "The soldiers not only operate and maintain the latest technology, they find new and ingenious ways to employ it."

Mr. Perry told a meeting of American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics in a speech at the U.S. Naval Post Graduate Training School here that he had seen U.S. operations over the last week in the Mediterranean, Bosnia, on the Arabian peninsula and in Japan.

"I can report to you that it's a dangerous world out there," he said. "I can also report to you without any question that we have the best damned military forces in the world."

Mr. Perry, 69, who has told President Bill Clinton that he will leave the Pentagon as soon as a successor is named, said that he was proud of money-saving reforms in military acquisition, base closings and other areas during his three years as secretary.

But he stressed that the administration's plan to keep the defence budget essentially at current levels for the next six years must be maintained in order to retain dominance over enemies like the Iraqi military, which a U.S.-led coalition defeated in the 1991 Gulf war.

"It is going to require very, very good management," Mr. Perry said.

He was asked after the speech if the new quadrennial defence review, which the Pentagon will undertake next year, could change the current U.S. military strategy of being prepared to fight and win two major regional conflicts at once.

"The question is whether America is prepared to pay the price to maintain a position of world leadership, to maintain a position of trying to influence events all around the world that could affect American security," he responded.

"If the answer to that is 'Yes,' which I believe it should be, then there is a price to pay," Mr. Perry said.

New ways needed to detain Bosnia war criminals — Bildt

LONDON (R) — The international community's high representative in Bosnia said Wednesday new measures might be used to arrest indicted war criminals still at large a year after war ended in the former Yugoslav republic.

Speaking on the opening day of a major conference to review the Bosnian peace process, mediator Carl Bildt said a new approach must be considered if the former warring parties refused to hand over suspects to the Hague war crimes tribunal.

"I believe that we need to consider new measures if no action is taken by the parties themselves," Mr. Bildt said.

"That would also include the ability to pick up those that the parties themselves refuse to hand over to the tribunal," he said on BBC television.

The failure of the heavily-armed, 60,000-strong NATO-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia to arrest dozens of indicted war criminals still at large has exposed them to widespread international criticism.

British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind took a more cautious line on whether the peacekeepers, due to be replaced with a slimmed down force about half the current size, should be ordered to hunt down suspected war criminals.

"I'm not sure it's fair to expect that to be the responsibility of the military force," he said. "The military force is there to carry out military tasks; it's there to prevent a resumption of the conflict."

While the policy remained that NATO would arrest war criminals if the opportunity presented itself, Mr. Rifkind said this was difficult because suspects were often protected by their own people in areas to which NATO did not have access.

The London conference takes place against a background of growing uncertainty in Belgrade, where for two weeks thousands of opposition supporters have marched against Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, accusing him of rigging local elections.

The two-day peace implementation conference, grouping more than 50 national delegations as well as representatives from major aid agencies, will discuss ways of rebuilding Bosnia a year after the Dayton peace deal which ended the war.

It is expected to criticise the country's communities for not sticking to the terms of the peace accord.

British officials say the Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats are violating Dayton by hampering freedom of movement, preventing refugees from returning home, committing human rights abuses and refusing to hand over indicted war criminals.

The officials said the most effective sanction was to withhold promised aid to those Bosnian ethnic communities which failed to respect Dayton.

Apart from the war crimes issue, one of the most important issues facing the conference will be the return of more than two million Bosnian refugees.

Mr. Rifkind said that while 250,000 had returned, more than two million were still abroad.

While the international community remained willing to provide aid to Bosnia in order to help refugees return to their homes, that depended on Bosnian authorities allowing this to happen.

"It is conditional on Bosnians responding in a positive way to the rebuilding of their country," Mr. Rifkind said.



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Rescue personnel evacuate an injured commuter from the underground railway station after a bomb exploded on a train killing two people and injuring 47, eight of them seriously, Tuesday. An explosive device in a train carriage of the RER regional express exploded at the Port Royal Station in Paris (Reuters photo)

N. Korea to apologise for submarine incident soon— U.S. congressman

WASHINGTON (AFP) — North Korea will probably apologise soon to South Korea for targeting it with a botched spy-submarine mission earlier this year, a U.S. congressman just back from Pyongyang said Tuesday.

Representative Bill Richardson said he was "very blunt and honest with the North Koreans and said they need to offer a gesture of contrition for the submarine incident — an expression of regret."

"My sense is that the North Koreans will do this some time in the not-too-distant future," said Mr. Richardson, who last week negotiated the release of an American charged with spying and held in North Korea.

He predicted that "in two weeks some kind of announcement will be made by them," adding: "We have to be flexible in how they do it."

By releasing 26-year-old Evan Carl Hunziker last week, he said, "the North Koreans were trying to send a signal that they're ready to come out of the shell that was caused by the submarine incident."

"They're saying, 'we're hoping... we can start talking with the United States and South Korea on other issues,'" Mr. Richardson told a small group of reporters at his congressional office here.

The democrat from New Mexico, a frequent emissary on behalf of Americans in trouble abroad, also said he expects to return to North Korea for a fourth visit "in the next 60 days."

He declined to say what issues he would discuss with North Korean officials, but the Clinton administration has been pressing North Korea to exchange liaison offices in Washington and Pyongyang.

The two countries have no diplomatic relations.

Pyeongyang's incremental rapprochement with Washington and Seoul came to a virtual standstill after a North Korean submarine ran aground off South Korea in September with some two dozen armed commandos on board.

Mr. Richardson said his main interlocutor in North Korea was First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Suk-Ju, with whom he had met on previous occasions.

How the new republican-run congress, which takes over in January, deals with North Korea will depend in large part on how North Korea handles the submarine incident, he said.

Republican legislators have taken a tough line on Pyongyang in the last two years, accusing President Bill Clinton's administration of toeing an indulgent line toward the world's last remaining Stalinist country at the expense of a close U.S. ally, South Korea.

They have notably objected to U.S. emergency food aid to North Korea and threatened to cut funding for a 1994 deal neutralizing Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program — one of Mr. Clinton's proudest foreign policy accomplishments.

"Before anything on any issue goes further, it's important to remove the submarine incident, that North Korea take those steps to show an expression of regret," Mr. Richardson said.

He noted that his North Korean hosts had agreed to allow a Pentagon team to visit before Christmas as part of their effort to account for Americans missing since the 1950-53 Korean war.

Mr. Richardson also got clearance for two republican congressmen, Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania and representative Bob Livingston of Louisiana, to pay a long-sought visit to North Korea.

He failed again, however, to win a visa for Republican representative Jay Kim, the only Korean-born member of the U.S. congress and a staunch critic of Pyongyang.

Suu Kyi kept at home; students bristle

RANGOON (R) — Burma's military rulers confined opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi to her home while student demonstrators attempted to stage another rally at the troubled Yangon Institute of Technology (YIT) Wednesday.

A Suu Kyi aide told Reuters by telephone that the Nobel laureate had been told to remain inside her lakeside Rangoon home. Access to her house had been barred, the aide said, and no reasons were given for the action.

"It is virtual house arrest. We were informed yesterday that she cannot leave her compound..." the aide said.

Asked if restrictions on Ms. Suu Kyi may have been linked to the student protests, the aide said it was possible.

Diplomats said Ms. Suu Kyi's confinement could be temporary and was aimed at preventing her from becoming drawn unwittingly into any student unrest.

Spokesmen for the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) were not available for comment.

The restriction imposed on Ms. Suu Kyi by the SLORC followed student protests that began at the YIT late Monday and culminated in the heart of the capital before sunrise Tuesday.

Police detained about 300 of 400 student demonstrators near the Central Shwe Dagon Pagoda after they refused to disperse in the early hours of Tuesday.

The demonstration, which drew nearly 2,000 students at its peak Monday, was the biggest street protest seen in Rangoon since the September 1988 pro-democracy uprisings in which thousands were killed or jailed by the SLORC.

The human rights group Amnesty International said in a statement that five members of the NLD's youth wing had been detained by the military for interrogation after they left Ms. Suu Kyi's house Tuesday. "The compound is now sealed and no one can enter or leave," Amnesty said.

Meanwhile, Burma's journalists working for the foreign media condemned the beating of one of their colleagues by police while he was covering this week's student street protests.

Myo Thant, a reporter for the Japanese newspaper Yomiuri Shinbun, was beaten up early Tuesday as police dispersed about 400 demonstrating students from YIT in central Rangoon, the Foreign Correspondents Club of Myanmar (FCCM) said.

Tigers blast train to northeast Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas exploded powerful bombs and damaged a cargo and passenger train in northeastern Sri Lanka Wednesday, wounding 10 civilians, the military here said.

The train was on its way to the port town of Trincomalee when it was bombed just before reaching its destination, the ministry said, adding that 10 passengers were wounded and admitted to hospital.

Security authorities in the region believe that the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) carried out the attack to disrupt communications to the region.

The train was taking two carriages of passengers to Trincomalee and was due to bring back another passenger train from the area to the capital Colombo, officials said.

"There had been intelligence reports of a possible

lute attack against a fuel train."

"Looks like they attacked the cargo and passenger train because they couldn't get at a fuel train."

The LTTE is leading a protracted campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated.

More than 50,000 people have been killed in bitter fighting in the past 24 years.

60,000 Muslims rally in the south as fighting rages

SULTAN KUDARAT, Philippines (AFP) — Some 60,000 Muslims gathered in this southern town Wednesday to denounce discrimination by the Christian majority, some calling for a separate Islamic state, witnesses said.

The rally, organized by Muslim religious leaders, was held as security forces battled guerrillas of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Zamboanga peninsula to the west, leaving at least 12 people dead.

Thousands of Muslims from the main southern island of Mindanao had been gathering here since Tuesday. The protesters occupied two kilometers of a national highway.

Army division spokesman Lieutenant Noel Detoyato estimated the crowd at between 50,000 to 60,000 people.

The military said that two civilians were killed and five others were wounded Wednesday as clashes between the MILF and soldiers escalated in the town of Sirawai outside the main southern city of Zamboanga west of Sultan Kudarat.

Four soldiers and six guerrillas were killed in the initial clashes Monday, military and civilian sources said.

Army Colonel Asley Salazar blamed the MILF for attacking military outposts despite an order by President Fidel Ramos for unilateral ceasefire during the Christmas holidays.

"We are forced to fight back," he said.

Speakers at the mass rally made no mention of the MILF or the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) which signed a peace treaty with the government in September in exchange for

wide autonomy in 14 Muslim-populated southern provinces.

However, the speeches highlighted the centuries-old resentment felt by Muslims here against the Christian majority in this largely Roman Catholic nation.

A delegate from the province of Zamboanga Del Sur read a resolution calling for the establishment of an "independent Islamic state" as the crowd shouted "God is great."

Another resolution from the predominantly Muslim province of Sulu said that "the Bangsa Moro (Moro Nation) people should decide their destiny and self-determination."

"We want to be freed from oppression, deprivation, exploitation, abuses, poverty and disease," said Abduhay Lingga an Islamic teacher who organized the rally.

Troops join police alert after Paris rush-hour bombing

PARIS (R) — Troops and police tightened security across France Wednesday after the bombing of a rush-hour Paris commuter train revived memories of similar attacks in France last year.

"We must be alert to the possibility that this was not an isolated attack," government spokesman Alain Lamassoure told Europe 1 radio.

"The French people must show the same solidarity and sang-froid as they displayed last year."

Two people died and 79 others were wounded or injured in the bombing.

Seven were seriously hurt. Interior Minister Jean-Louis Debré said 1,800 soldiers were being assigned to assist police.

Tuesday's bombing bore the hallmarks of the 1995 blasts claimed by Algerian Muslim militants.

The bomb, which exploded on an RER commuter train as it entered the underground Port Royal Station during Tuesday's evening rush hour, consisted of a 13

kilogrammes gas canister packed with nails, Mr. Debré told a cabinet meeting.

Though no one immediately claimed responsibility, the type of bomb as well as the target and timing recalled last year's attacks claimed by Muslim extremists fighting Algeria's French-backed military rulers.

Eight people were killed and more than 160 injured in those blasts, which began in July 1995 with a commuter train bombing.

President Jacques Chirac told his cabinet that emergency workers and the French people deserved praise for their sang-froid in the face of a new terrorist threat, government spokesman Alain Lamassoure told reporters.

Mr. Chirac then convened a second meeting of top ministers to confer on the government response to the attack as officials worried over whether the blast was an isolated act or the first in a new series of deadly attacks.

Mr. Lamassoure said the investigation was still wide open.

Paris prosecutors said they had asked veteran anti-terrorist magistrates Laurence Le Vert, Jean-Louis Bruguière and Jean-François Ricard to start a judicial inquiry.

Mr. Chirac, in a live television address Tuesday evening, called the attack "a barbaric and terrorist act" and vowed that France would do everything in its power to fight terrorism.

Police chiefs drafted in 400 riot police, gendarmes and troops to put a security operation codenamed Vigipirate back into force immediately. Five hundred others were expected to join them later in the day.

The operation, applied across France during last year's wave of attacks from July to October, triggered patrols by police, paramilitary gendarmes and soldiers at public transport stations, public buildings and in the streets.

Border controls, virtually eliminated under a European Union open border

agreement, were reinstated Tuesday night.

The explosion occurred in the fourth carriage of an RER regional express train at 6.05 p.m. (1705 GMT) as it drew into the left bank station near the sprawling Luxembourg gardens and the Latin quarter.

Investigators found fragments of the canister on the spot and the body of one of the victims had been mutilated by nails.

Yves Bonnet, a former head of France's DST Counter-Espionage Service, said: "Only the Algerian Islamic Armed Group (GIA) threatens France with this kind of attack."

Following last year's attacks, dozens of suspected Muslim fundamentalists were rounded up across the country and the government claimed to have destroyed the guerrilla network it said had been responsible for those bombings.

But after Tuesday's blast, officials speculated that other groups might have quickly stepped in their place.

Zaire rebels push west, reassure mining firms

GOMA, Zaire (Agencies) — Zairean rebels have pushed deeper into the heart of the country and reassured foreign companies that they will honour mining concessions.

Jean Kabongo, special security adviser to rebel leader Laurent Kabila, told Reuters in Goma Tuesday night that the rebels had taken the large town of Kindu, about 320 kilometres west of where the rebellion started.

"We have Kindu, Bunia and Walikale, as well as Butembo and Lubero," Commander Kabongo said. The rebels had already said they held the other four towns and independent sources have confirmed the fall of all but Walikale and Kindu.

Kindu is the most westerly town the rebels say they have captured. It is on the Zaire River, upstream from the major city of Kisangani, the rebels' next big target.

Aid agencies in East Africa said they could not confirm the fall of Kindu, where they have no presence because the Zairean army had turned it into a large military base.

"The Zaireans (government) had been reinforcing Kindu heavily since last week with hundreds of soldiers flown in from other parts of the country," one aid agency official said.

"If it is true the town has fallen, then it's very significant but it could also mean lots of massacres there because of the heavy military presence."

"Psychologically it's a big blow to Zairean troops as it would have consequences for Kisangani. This also leaves eastern Zaire with only one airport — Kisangani," he added.

Earlier this week the rebels said they had entered parts of Kisangani but Commander Kabongo backtracked from this Tuesday.

"Kisangani is surrounded, but we haven't moved in yet. When we do, we will be in a position to travel down the river to Kinshasa. This fighting has been hard for our troops, but they are used to it, they are from here," he said.

Kabongo also said the rebels, known as the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, would leave mining concessions untouched in the areas they control, provided the mining companies pay taxes to the rebel administration.

The rebels will try to open up new areas to mining, especially in the central region of Kasai, he added.

"All diamond mines and operations, like De Beers in Mbuji-Mayi, will remain in the hands of the companies who have been running them and operating the franchises up until now."

"This is their job. We will change the taxation system in as much as legitimate taxes and permission money are given to us rather than the Zairean government. We will not interfere as long as they continue to respect our regulations," he said.

"In Kasai, more diamonds must be mined, the country's

mineral wealth exploited. We are going to try and throw the area open for government-sponsored mining licences in areas in Kasai that have not yet been explored," he added.

The rebels say that on their southern front they have already captured the mining centre of Kamituga, where the South Africa-based company Anglo-American Corp. has been operating.

In the past few years diamonds have given a new lease of life to Kisangani, which has been hit by a wave of looting by Zairean soldiers fleeing the rebel advances.

The rebels have not said they are after diamonds, but are likely to need significant funds both for armaments and to persuade starving, suddenly dislocated people in the region they occupy that they can do better than the previous rulers.

Bunia on the northeastern front fell to the rebels Monday night. Refugees and Ugandan military sources have confirmed this.

The rebellion broke out in October among Zaireans of Rwandan origin whom the government threatened to repatriate, along with more than a million Rwandan Hutu refugees who took refuge in Zaire after the slaughter of Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 1994.

The fighting has scattered hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees and displaced Zaireans deep into the countryside.

Meanwhile, aid workers have entered the eastern Zairean town of Uvira for the first time in over a month to evaluate humanitarian needs in the region, a spokesman for the World Food Programme (WFP) said Wednesday.

The delegation met with rebel leaders in control of the town during the three-hour visit.

Also Wednesday, the main organisation representing Rwandan Hutu refugees warned that refugees returning to Rwanda were being met by "killings, disappearance and arbitrary arrests."

United Nations agencies have so far said the return of around 600,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees from Zaire over the last few weeks had gone ahead smoothly.

Seven representatives, from the WFP, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the U.N. Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF-Doctors Without Borders), the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Federation of Red Cross Societies, travelled by road to Uvira, in South Kivu province, from Bukavu.

WFP spokesman Michel Quintaglie, citing one of the members of the delegation, said that life appeared largely to have returned to normal in the town, with markets and shops functioning and equipped.

However, he said that all the offices of aid organisations had been looted.

Pakistan rocked by 2 bombings in 24 hours

KARACHI (AFP) — A bomb exploded in this Pakistani port city injuring 17 people Wednesday, as officials blamed Indian agents for a blast 24 hours earlier in the city of Lahore during Chinese President Jiang Zemin's visit there.

Officials said a possible link between the two bombings was being investigated.

One of the victims of the Karachi bombing was in critical condition with severe facial injuries, doctors said, and a few others were seriously injured.

The explosion caused a deep crater outside the seven-storey Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) building, which also houses several privately-owned offices, an AFP correspondent on the scene reported.

At least 12 people were injured in Lahore Tuesday, when a bomb exploded outside a busy shopping centre, a few kilometres from the state guest house where Jiang's entourage and his Pakistani host President Farooq Ahmed Leghari were staying.

Officials in Lahore accused

Africans delay submitting names for top U.N. post

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Despite a recommendation from the head of the Organisation of African Unity, African ambassadors said Tuesday no new names would be submitted for U.N. secretary-general at this time.

"Secretary-General Boutros Ghali is still Africa's candidate," said James Jonah, the ambassador from Sierra Leone after a meeting of African U.N. envoys.

But Djibouti's ambassador Roble Olhaye said more time was needed because some envoys had just received a letter from Cameroon President Paul Biya, the chairman of the Organisation of Africa Unity, who suggested African leaders could submit other candidates.

The OAU last July endorsed the 74-year old Egyptian diplomat, whose five-year term ends on Jan. 31. The United States vetoed his candidacy on Nov. 19, the only member of the 15-seat security council to do so.

"This is the first time people are seeing the Biya letter," said Mr. Olhaye. "Some are saying that their heads of state had not received the letter and there are some who have a different interpretation of the letter."

"A lot of people who have been meeting here today need to have a little more time," he said.

Nevertheless, security council members are growing impatient with delays since the U.S. veto and had thought that Biya's letter would bring forth a host of nominations from Africa, which is being given preference in the selection of a secretary-general.

In Washington, state department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the United States expected that "a number of African countries will finally put forward in the next several days candidates for election to the post of secretary-general."

And in New York U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright said she was pleased that Biya's letter appeared to have broken the "logjam" in the council.

Diplomats said that envoys from the Ivory Coast had spoken to council President Paulo Fulci of Italy about the candidacy of their foreign minister, Amara Essy. But no letter has been received in writing that would make the nomination official.

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Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

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Telephones: 684311, 699634

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

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Dismantling old barriers

THE SPEECH of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan to Global Panel 1996 at the Hague Tuesday presented many challenges to both Arabs and Israelis that go beyond the nitty-gritty construction of formal peace in the Middle East. "It is disheartening," the Prince told his audience, "that the new Middle East looks rather like the old one: Stalemate peace negotiations, closures and blockades, political posturing and brinkmanship. This is not the stuff of which peace is made, let alone security and prosperity."

The peace process, which so far resulted in the Jordan-Israel peace treaty and the Oslo deals after Egypt made its peace with Israel, would fundamentally change the region, and the dynamics of the previous era of conflict and hostility would give way to a new regional order based on positive co-existence, cooperation and development that unfortunately has not happened for no other reason but Israel's failure to bury the past and to adopt a new spirit of cooperation rather than confrontation. The message of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Global Panel 1996 came to give yet another proof of Israel's unwillingness to do what it takes to bring peace to the region.

Instead of responding in kind to the genuine message of peace and the hope for a bright future for the area, Mr. Netanyahu clung to his old and sterile rhetoric about security at the price of everything.

Israel must realise that it is no longer viable to put the cart before the horse and that security can never be attained without achieving real peace. As Prince Hassan has said, Israel needs to articulate a broader definition of security that would include an exchange of occupied Arab land for peace but would not be confined to it. What is needed is sophisticated sense of security that cannot solely depend on military factors. It must encompass political, economic and human dimensions of the conflict.

Israel can no longer live in a psychological and physical fortress as the Prince commented. The peoples of the region need to start a genuine process of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue in order to tear down the mental and emotional barriers that existed for decades.

Just as the Arabs were called upon to join the campaign against anti-Semitism, the Israelis are expected to join the campaign against Islamophobia instead of promoting biased or distorted conceptions. New partnerships in the Middle East are needed in order to force the challenges of the future. If Israel wants to be part of the new Middle East and earn its place in it, it must end its dogmatic views of the region and reorient its political culture to a new concept of peace in which all are equal in rights and responsibilities.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i daily criticised the government for depriving the civil servants and government employees of an extra cost of living allowance in the 1997 fiscal budget. Samir Qetani said that in view of the rising cost of living and the increase in the price of basic commodities, the employees who have limited income are unable to cope and make both ends meet. Funds that could be partly used to give a raise to the employees can be saved by curtailing corruption and misuse of funds by senior officials in various departments and ministries, suggested the writer. Citing figures of losses of funds, as recently released by the audit bureau, resulting from violations committed by these departments, he said these show that the treasury last year incurred losses estimated at JD 96 million. These losses were the result of poor financial control, abuse of management, thefts, non-abidance by the given rules, violations in awarding tenders to contractors, poor assessments and the like, added the writer. He said that the losses at the Ministry of Supply alone were estimated at JD 55 million. The writer said that stricter control on the performance of these departments can make available huge funds, part of which could be used to improve the living standards of the majority of civil servants.

A WRITER for the weekly Al Sabeel accused Jordanian embassies abroad of wasting public funds through extravagant spending on non-essential matters and of ignoring the real interests of their country. Samih Maaitah said many of the Jordanian diplomats spend lavishly on renting luxurious homes and cars and thousands of dinars are wasted monthly on embassy telephone calls, most of which are not necessary. In addition, most of these embassies work like the government departments, which are in the habit of delaying the execution of business through bureaucracy, even in such simple tasks as renewing Jordanian expatriates' passports, charged the writer. He said Jordanian embassies are supposed to serve as an extension to the homeland in foreign countries and ought to serve as a meeting place for Jordanians living abroad and to look after their own interests, extending a helping hand to those who need help. The writer said the government should reconsider the status and reexamine the performance of each of the Jordanian embassies, with a view to curtailing their expenditures which run into tens of millions of dinars at a time when the Kingdom is reeling under a chronic economic crisis.

Taleban — the uniting factor in Afghanistan

By Dr. S. Farooq Hasanat

BEFORE SEPTEMBER this year, Afghanistan would present a perplexing scene, harder to comprehend even for those who had followed the Afghan situation since the Soviet invasion of that country in 1979. The frequent shifting of alliances and loyalties by the factional warlords made the country suffer, despair extended and all norms of progress vanished. But this time, no external force was directly responsible for their plight and they had only themselves to blame.

The presence of the Taleban in the Afghan political and military arenas is fiercely contested by various interested quarters who pretend genuine concern for the reported violations of human rights and are after attaining vital national selfish ends. But no matter what the critics say, the fact remains that the Pushtun Taleban represent the majority of ethnic Afghans and provide the only military force through which the stability and unity of Afghanistan, with its ethnically diverse society within which adjustments are to be made, can be possibly maintained in the future.

In Afghanistan, the Pushtun represent more than 60 per cent of the total population, while the other six ethnic groups, Uzbek, Turkmen, Farsiwan, Aimaq, Sialbash and Hazaras, are distinctive and have peculiar political and social ambitions which in the past were a major cause of conflict with the larger tribes of their society.

There was never a uniform popular attitude towards the central authority, but after the Soviet colonial experience the sense of belonging and affinity with the land of Afghanistan as a

single entity should have posed less problems; unfortunately, it never was the case.

While assessing the current Afghan situation, one should not be overwhelmed by the question of much discussed violations of human rights by the Taleban. The real danger to the Afghan society comes from the invariable existence of greedy and corrupt warlords, scattered all over the place. It is conceivable that once the Taleban take command of the whole country and establish a centrally controlled nationhood, the vital question of accommodation of other ethnic factions can be dealt with, through a representative institution.

International and regional pressure can force the rigid Taleban to mend their policies towards women and

other issues. Otherwise, the country will remain fragmented and in danger of getting split into even more than three independent parts, which in turn would create more instability and sufferings for the Afghan people.

Amongst the regional nations, Pakistan could be the most essential in helping bring peace to this unfortunate land. It has the longest border with Afghanistan and thus the capacity to provide all needed logistic support to the landlocked country. Afghanistan owes its trade and social support to the liberal passage policies of its eastern neighbour, Pakistan has close religious and ethnic links with Afghanistan; Pakistan provided a safe haven to the 3 million Afghan refugees that fled after the Soviet

invasion; the Afghan Mujahedeen were provided Pakistani passports and the borders were kept open for those who wanted to take asylum in Pakistan; all Afghan leaders were given extensive Pakistani support against the Soviet invasion and they operated from the Pakistani territory, thus subjecting Pakistan to frequent Soviet bombardments and sabotage activities in which thousands of Pakistani citizens lost their lives.

In April 1988, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Soviet Union and the United States signed an accord providing for Soviet withdrawal, and the return of the Afghan refugees. The accord stipulated that Washington and Moscow should oversee and guarantee the plan. But, the Americans got disinterest-

ed in Afghanistan, once their interests were served, while the Soviets disintegrated. The country was left at the mercy of adventure and plunder by its own leaders.

Nonetheless, Pakistan continued to play a positive role towards its Muslim neighbour, providing a platform for the Afghan factions to discuss their differences.

Within the flurry of current global unrest and armed conflicts, Afghanistan poses one of the most complex and hard tasks for traditional peacekeepers. The United Nations and regional groupings, such as the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), have been reduced to mere spectators.

While the country is busy

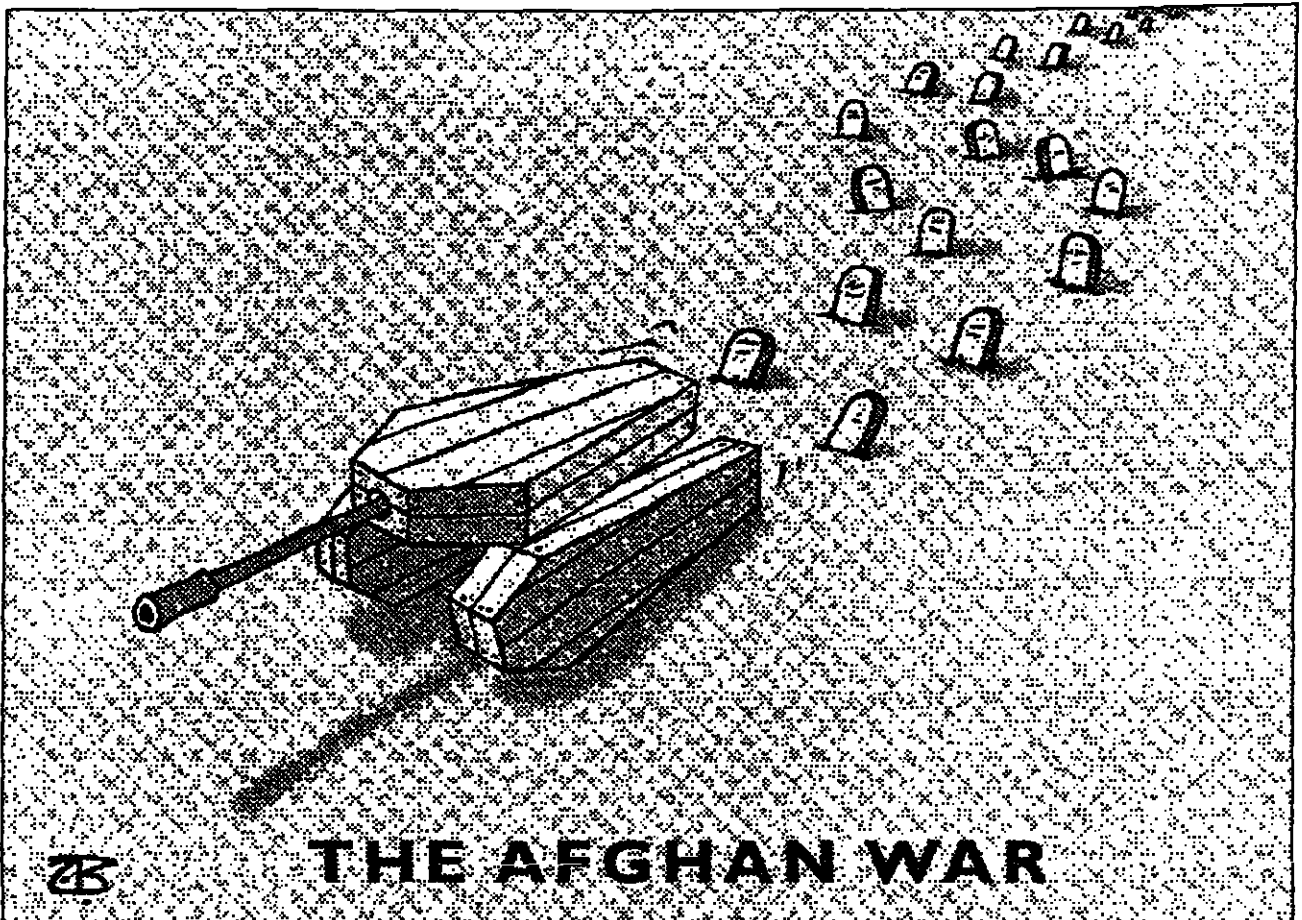
splitting itself apart, the civil war goes on unabated, encouraged and supported by countries that once made no bones about their dislike for the Islamic resistance against the Soviets.

On Sept. 11, 1996, the Taleban captured the eastern city of Jalalabad and within two weeks were able to take control of Kabul. In the process, villages and cities fell without any resistance. There was not one single major battle which the Taleban had to fight. Frustrated with the unwise policies of the warlords, the Afghans supported the Taleban, for peace and stability. Military commanders like Burhanuddin Rabbani, Ahmad Shah Massud and former communist General Dostum ridiculed the admirable Afghan struggle against the Soviet invasion. In the post-Soviet era they thrived by marketing narcotics and arms, while the people suffered in poverty and misery.

Now that the Taleban are in firm control of three-fourths of Afghanistan, including the capital and two of the key cities, Jalalabad and Herat, they should offer a dialogue to accommodate other ethnic factions in the mainstream. Hizb-e-Islami leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar could be the first choice of the new Afghan leadership.

And it is here that Pakistan should, once again, play its role by persuading the OIC and the ECO countries to help bring the Afghan factions together for a meaningful dialogue and rehabilitation.

The writer is visiting professor at the Centre for Strategic Studies of the University of Jordan. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.



Who Owns Bibi Netanyahu?

By Eric Lee

IN A series of startling revelations from internal police sources, it has now become clear that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu secretly met with Russian Mafia boss Gregory Lushansky in June 1995 — and has been lying about the meeting ever since.

The meeting was set up by Minister of Industry and Trade Natan Sharansky and its purpose was to feel out the possibility of Lushansky donating several million dollars to the Likud election coffers. According to police sources, Lushansky was looking for a way to buy influence in Israeli politics, and Netanyahu seemed the best approach. It is possible that the Russian godfather made Netanyahu "an offer he could not refuse." We do not know what Lushansky asked in exchange for his generosity.

The source of the story, which broke on Saturday morning, is first of all Labor MK Moshe Shahal, the former internal security minister, who learned about the Netanyahu-Lushansky meeting from internal

police intelligence reports. The meeting took place either in the Knesset or in Netanyahu's home. Very high ranking officials in the police and other former ministers in the government have been confirming the story to journalists ever since.

Shahal has not explained why he did not act on the report when it first crossed his desk.

It now appears that the basis of the original police report may have been intelligence supplied by foreign sources, possibly American, who are keeping a close watch on the activities of organized crime in Russia. (Copies of the secret police report were supplied to Israel's General Security Service, the Mossad, and — through Interpol — to police departments around the world.) Western and Eastern European intelligence sources had fingered Lushansky as someone seeking influence in Israeli and Russian politics. Lushansky was apparently involved in efforts to influence the Yeltsin campaign for the Russian presidency as well. There have also

been reports that Lushansky tried to buy influence in the Clinton White House as well. (He'd have to take a number there.)

In its coverage of the case, the rightist Jerusalem Post called Lushansky an "alleged Russian gangster" but revealed no details of his business. On the other hand, Yosi Melman, writing in Ha'aretz, filled us in with some more details of a man who may be a leading figure in the Russian Cosa Nostra.

Lushansky appears to be an owner of the largest Russian plane in the world, an Antonov 124, which was used to transport missiles from North Korea to Iran.

He is reputed to have close links to the Russian intelligence community, and allegedly helped transfer KGB funds out of Russia into foreign banks. The Jerusalem Post itself reports that Lushansky was a "senior KGB officer" in the 1970s and "employs at least one person who was in a senior position in Soviet intelligence".

According to reports, the British and Hong Kong governments have refused

admission to Lushansky because of his Mafia connections.

The Jerusalem Post mentioned that Lushansky's name does not appear on the Israeli police list of 33 Russian Mafia crime bosses. But Israel Television's crime reporter Uri Cohen Aharonov revealed on Saturday night that high ranking police officers now say — on the record — that the list is out of date and needs to be reviewed.

Three years ago, Lushansky received Israeli citizenship and maintains a residence in Tel Aviv's luxurious Opera apartments, though most of his business is conducted in Austria.

Sharansky admits to meeting several times with Lushansky, but Netanyahu's office has issued stringent denials of Bibi's presence at any of these meetings. Sharansky's spokesman, Roman Polonsky, also denies that Lushansky funneled Mafia money into the Russian immigrant party which Sharansky heads. Sharansky does not say what he and Lushansky spoke about at their meetings.

The case raises several interesting questions:

What was Grisha Lushansky seeking in exchange for the millions of dollars he was offering the Likud?

Did the Likud take the money?

What has Netanyahu done since coming to power that has helped Lushansky's "business interests"?

Was Sharansky's highly successful campaign for the Knesset funded in part by Iranian arms sales?

Has Netanyahu ordered an official cover up by the police?

What does the international intelligence community, including Interpol and especially the CIA, know about Bibi's links to the Russian Mafia and ex-KGB?

The Israeli Opposition has been strangely polite about the whole affair. Perhaps this is because of Shahal's own unusual behavior in not acting on the information when he received, nearly 18 months ago, the head of Labor's faction in the Knesset, Ranan Cohen, has called for a meeting of a Knesset committee to dis-

cuss the affair. Meretz leader Yosi Sarid has also called for a Knesset inquiry. Shahal has compared the case to Watergate, stressing that Internal Security Minister Fahalani is playing the same role as Nixon's aides in covering up a major scandal.

The Opposition must hit much harder and take this case as far as it will go. This includes demanding an investigation by the State Controller, open hearings in the Knesset, and the involvement of the state prosecutor and the police. It may even be necessary to create an official state commission of inquiry to conduct an independent investigation.

In any event, the evidence as it now stands — backed up by high ranking officers in the Israeli Police and two former Government ministers — is that Bibi Netanyahu may be Israel's first Prime Minister owned lock, stock and barrel by organized crime.

The above article is reprinted from the Bibi Watch Internet issue.

Economic hardship for Palestinians — 'the tip of a huge iceberg'

By Mohammad Shaker Ahmad

The writer is political editor of the Palestinian daily Al Kud's. The article below is reprinted from the Jerusalem Post.

We can congratulate ourselves. Palestinian society has come of age.

We not only have corruption, we have taken another step towards the developed countries.

Last week the Arab media carried news of the first ever Western-style Palestinian kidnapping, complete with all the usual techniques used in this kind of crime, down to the call to the victim's parents (wealthy restaurant

owners) and instructions on where the ransom money (new Israeli shekels — NIS 35,000) should be delivered.

On Sunday nine-year-old Osama Paulos was kidnapped on his way to school in Ramallah by two men in a car. His ordeal did not last long. On Monday he was located by Palestinian police and returned to his family.

The kidnapping shook Palestinian society violently.

There should be no sympathy shown to those who perpetrate such a crime. Every effort must be made to prevent it from becoming a precedent, something that would surely shatter our social stability.

Whatever deterrents are

deemed necessary should be enforced — even to the extent of capital punishment.

But the circumstances in our homeland are part of the picture.

Without any deliberate intention of playing down the severity of this week's kidnapping, one must look at the devastating economic situation in the Palestinian areas, where unemployment has soared to unthinkable heights, reaching around 45 per cent in the West Bank and 60 per cent in the Gaza Strip.

The ease with which Osama was found indicates that the kidnappers were not professionals. The kidnapping was an amateurish business, a desperate act by

desperate people.

With our economy unwillingly tied to Israel, our crippled industries and agriculture could provide only minimal job opportunities for our workers.

The question that floats to the surface is: How can the vast majority of Palestinian families, now suffering from unemployment, earn their living when our dependence on Israel is exploited to serve Israel's own interests?

Closing off the Palestinian territories was the last straw.

While Israel and the donor states have been persistent in their demands for security, they have ignored the other side: the potential violence, the possibility of internal Palestinian crime

increasing threateningly.

What happened in Ramallah last week should serve as a warning of what might happen shortly unless our devastated economy improves and reaches tolerable levels.

If the international powers supporting the peace process were serious in their claims, what obstacles would stand in the way of building a consistent, productive and independent Palestinian economy, one capable of providing sufficient job opportunities for Palestinians?

It is neither convincing nor a contribution to peace for these states to stand by idle and watch a deteriorating situation heat to the verge of explosion.

Is it credible that the whole global peace bloc cannot help to build an economy that could provide a dignified standard of living for just two million people?

The case of Osama Paulos is the tip of an enormous iceberg.

Chilling in itself as the incident is, it is an important indicator underlying the miserable conditions under which so many Palestinians live.

While the criminals in this case chose the path of the outlaw, most law-abiding people have resorted to patience, hope and waiting for things to change for the better.

But patience, too, has its limits.

Bye bye diaries

By Jean-Claude Elias

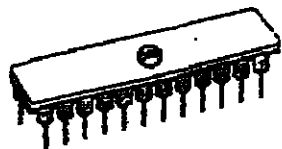
THE ELITIST club of software publishers, with Microsoft, Novell, Lotus, Corel and Oracle in the lead, wants you to use your PC to accomplish virtually every task you can think of. We can hardly blame these giant corporations for that, can we? That is for wanting to be ever more powerful and rich?

Not satisfied for having radically changed our well established habits in typing, writing and making calculations, they are trying to make us discard our traditional diaries, made of good old paper, and turn to computers to note our appointments, remarks, telephone numbers, list of things-to-do, and so forth. Indeed, word processing programmes (Word, WordPerfect, etc.) and electronic spreadsheets (Lotus, Excel, Quattro Pro) have proven to be more than adequate and truly useful to replace typewriters and manual calculations. However the new type of software, introduced a couple of years ago, named Organiser by Lotus and Scheduler by Microsoft, has not yet succeeded in replacing the traditional hard copy diaries.

Organiser and Scheduler are really attractive to look at. Starting one of these programmes for the first time makes you definitely want to use them. Well designed screens, colourful areas that let you easily recognise different groups of functions, fast search for keywords or strings of characters won't leave any healthy-minded user indifferent. All the practical tools that computers offer are there: For example with a simple click of the mouse, one can visualise the planning of a week, a month or the whole year and shuttle between these formats in a split second. If you depend on long lists of things-to-do that you keep writing and updating manually on a piece of paper, with tedious cycles of writing and erasing, the PC based software will delight you. Once a task is done, the software will automatically delete it for you, and will even keep track of it for future reference if you ask it to.

Appointment reminders, list of date-linked renewals, birthday reminders, follow up of projects and other goodies are all taken care of by Organiser and Scheduler. It would be a dream if you could always have the PC switched on and next to you, but it's not. A diary, whether on hard copy or in electronic format is something to which you need to have immediate, instant, easy access. This is

chip talk



Unfortunately not the way we use computers. We do not always leave them "on" and they need a desk top to be placed on. I can hear notebook computer users scream: "But my portable is always next to me and all it needs is my lap to sit on." Granted, when it comes to applications such as electronic diaries, notebooks are infinitely more practical than full size machines. They make a significant difference.

But even notebook machines are not as ready for you nor as reliable as hard copy diaries. They need power to be operated and, as strongly built as they have become, you cannot just toss them in your briefcase or on your bed like you would with their paper equivalent. Nor leave them in the sun on the back seat of your car. Nor tear off the page on which you spilled some coffee.

In spite of the above limitations inherent to the current status of computers, Organiser and Scheduler show their full power with very busy people. Indeed, for all those who have several appointments every day, who keep long lists of things-to-do and whose personal phone and address books compete with the public telephone company in size, electronic diaries may prove to be more practical than hard copy models, even with the relative limitation of having to be next to a computer.

It won't be long before we are surrounded by computers. They will be everywhere. They will probably become so "tough" that leaving them on the beach in August or throwing them on the floor won't damage them at all. There's also a good chance that they be solar powered without the need for the mains or for batteries. Paper diaries will then belong to the past.

Young..., but committed

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

YOUNG AND committed, and expressing the firm desire to refuse to be something altogether...

Disaccustomed, Disadvantaged, Disappointed, Discouraged, Discredited, Disdained, Disenchanted, Disillusioned, Disinclined, Disordered, Disoriented, Displaced, Discarded and Disvalued.

Arguably, this is how our society tends to make young people feel about their chances to make something out of their lives and be able to leave some kind of mark both now, and in the future.

Will they ever be able to make a difference or introduce change for the better? Only society holds the answer.

One important subject that these young people would have to address before anything else is that which has to do with the issue of trust. The trust needed to be able to recognise goodwill when they see it. The trust needed to be able to put behind them all the business of fraud and corruption that was so characteristic of their parents' and grandparents' lives. A trust needed in order to be able to build healthy and stable working relationships.

One thing which is at least quite commendable is that most of the stuff that we are told has to do with abuse, corruption and waste is out in the open. But this is also not quite true because even though everyone admits to the existence of these cases, very few people are prepared to openly discuss them. Most simply find it convenient to just look past them. In spite of this, such hints remain a brave start to the sought after brave new world. For all this, we are grateful to the few courageous editors and news correspondents willing to stick out their necks for the sake of truth.

Our cultural revolution is also taking hold. I refer here to the many concerts, exhibitions, recitals, movies, seminars and lectures that have dotted our cultural landscape over



the past few days. In itself, this is a very good thing, but, clearly, we have to get ourselves to be a little more open to not only what others do in this field, but also to what we can achieve in terms of creating our own brand of late 1990s culture where the concerns and intricacies of our society could be clearly represented.

Taste and appreciation are two other things that we still need to work on because we are so far off the mark in this department.

Heroes are another. Heroes who would be willing to invest in the efforts to foster creativity and innovation in a society where disobedience and selfishness are king-makers.

We need to do all of this if we want to succeed in the future. For even though this land has offered many people numerous chances over the years, it now has to offer talented young people real chances that they could easily find elsewhere.

This is very important. It would be a real shame if resourceful young people were made to feel at the end of the day that Jordan had not provided them with the opportunities to succeed that they would have almost certainly found had they looked elsewhere.

If we are prepared to do absolutely nothing about this, we should stand aside and let history be the judge of our actions.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

HOWLERS

* HE still hasn't bought an electric toothbrush. He doesn't know if his teeth are AC or DC.

* YOU can't trip him up. Asked to spell Mississippi, he'll come right back and ask whether you mean the river or the state.

* ASKED by his psychiatrist whether he had any pet hostilities, he demurred: "Oh, no, I just love animals."

* SHE came to the office in a bathing suit because the boss had promised to let her get in the office pool.

* HE says if it hadn't been for Thomas Edison, we'd all have been watching TV by candlelight.

* A FELLOW asked her if she was a somnambulist. She didn't know what it meant, so she slapped him just to be on the safe side.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

** He's a braggart.

Howa fash'shar.

** She's silly.

Heya abeeta.

** You're stupid.

Anta sakheef.

** They're hypocrites.

Hom munafiqoon.

** He's hocus pocus.

Howa dajjal.

** You're envious.

Anta hasood.

** She obstinate..

Heya aneeda.

** He's fool.

Howa ahmaq.

** You're a liar.

Anta kath'thab.

** They're thieves.

Hom lusoos.

** You're a sharper.

Anta awantaji.

JOKES

* "WHILE a little boy was talking to his father a donkey passed by them.
"Do donkeys marry, dad?"
"Nobody does except donkeys, my son."

* "A GIRL said: "I'm at a loss. I can neither choose the first nor the second. The first is smart, intelligent, stores much knowledge whereas the other wants to marry me."

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Syncopation is the characteristic of which type of music?

2. List four words or more in the English language that end in "dous"

3. What is a memorist?

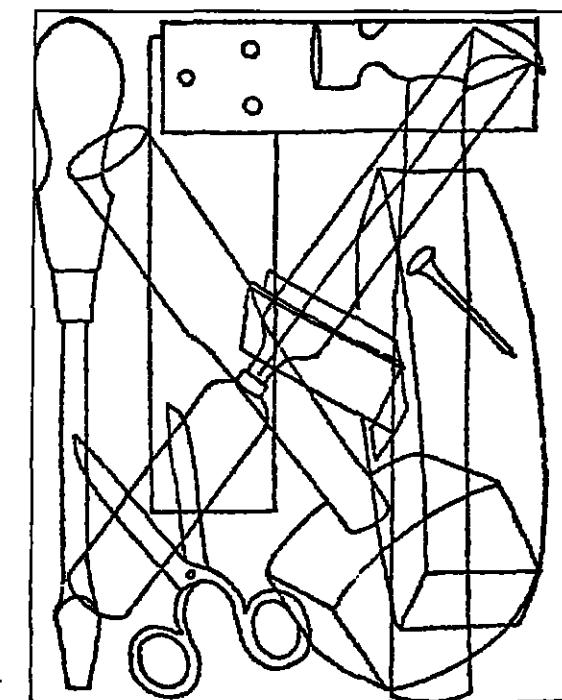
4. On what part of a man's face do the most hairs grow?

5. Distinguish between stalagmites and stalactites.

6. What historic building in Massachusetts was built from the money collected through lotteries?

PUZZLES

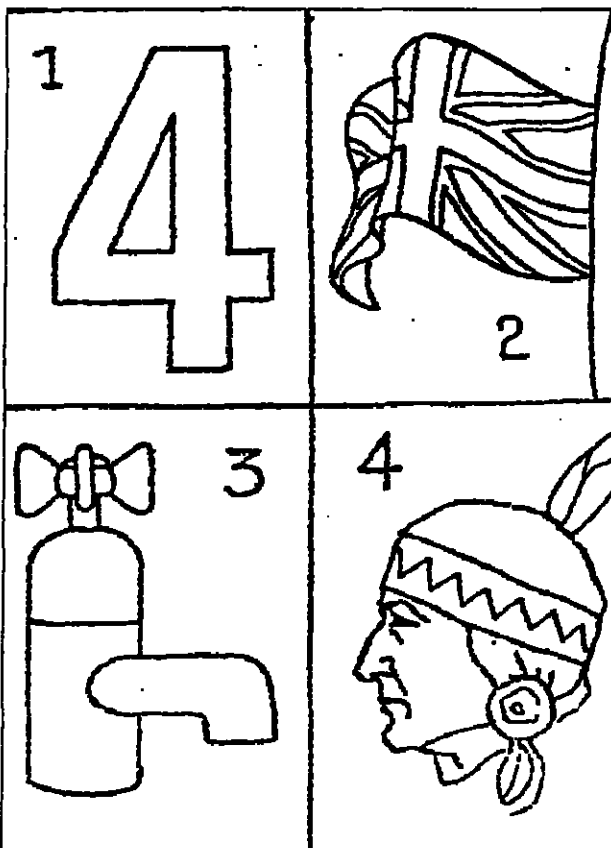
(A) MIXED UP TOOLS



Can you count the number of tools in the above illustration?

(B) FIRST TWO LETTERS

Form one word taking out two letters from each item in each square.
You don't need more than one minute to do that.



JTV CHANNEL TWO WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, December 5, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran	6:00	French Programme Magazine — Faut Pas Rever
2:05	Iris + Ovide & The Gang	7:00	Le Journal
2:35	Out Of This World	7:15	Magazine — Sports Et Musique
3:00	Covington Cross	7:30	News Headlines
3:30	Feature — The Tender	7:35	Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air
	Starring: John Travolta & Tito Larriva	8:01	Auto — Classics
5:00	News Flash	8:30	Album Show
5:02	Continuation Of Film	9:10	Documentary (Hold Up The Sun)
5:30	French Programmes	10:00	News In English
	Intertainment Varieties	10:30	Cover
7:00	Le Journal	11:15	Miami Vice
7:15	Magazine — Atomes Crochus	12:00	Yes Minister
7:30	News Headlines		
7:35	Pacific Station		
8:00	The American Chart Show		
8:30	Material World		
9:10	Kung Fu — The Legend Continues		
10:00	News In English		
10:25	Feature Film — She'll Take Romance		
	Starring: Linda Evans & Larry Poindexter		

Friday, December 6, 1996

			Science — Cinq Sur Cinq
		7:30	News Headlines
2:00	Holy Koran	7:35	Rosanne
2:05	Iris + Muppet Show	8:00	Disaster Chronicle — Documentary
3:00	See How They Grow	8:30	Cinema, Cinema
3:15	French Programme	9:10	The Lazarus Man
	L'Ecole Des Fans	10:00	News In English
4:00	Crystal Maze	10:25	Best Seller
5:00	News Flash	11:15	The Knock
5:02	News Flash Adventure		

Saturday, December 7, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran	5:00	Holy Koran
2:05	Adventures Of Mickey And Donald	5:02	Budgie The Little Helicopter
2:30	Circus	5:15	1 Love Lucy
3:00	French Programme	5:30	French Programme — Sciences Cartoon
	Document — La France Aux Mille Villages	6:00	Magazine — Montagne
3:30	Family Programme — Fete Des Bebes		At The Zoo
4:00	Gillette (Sports)		Documentary — On the Occasion Of The Day Of Human Rights
4:30	Chris Cross		News Flash
5:00	News Flash		Fun With Physics
5:02	Futures		They Came From Outer Space
5:15	Blue Healers		French Programme
6:00	French Programme		Serie — La Lumiere Des Justes
	Serie — Jack		Magazine — Extra Large
7:00	Le Journal		News Headlines
7:15	Magazine — Ziva		Murphy Brown
7:30	News Headlines		Magazine Zero — One
7:35	Something Wilder		Encounter
8:00	Documentary — Gardens Of The World		Lost Civilisations (Doc.)
8:30	Prism		News In English
9:10	Lois And Clark (Superman)		China Beach
10:00	News In English		Mission Impossible
10:25	Best Seller		Are You Being Served
11:15	Feature Film		

Sunday, December 8, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran	7:00	Holy Koran
2:05	Fievel's American Tails	7:05	Muppet Show
2:30	You Bet Your Life	7:30	Circus
3:00	French Programme	7:35	French Programme
3:30	Entertainment — Week-ends Specialux	8:01	Jeux — Pyramide
4:00	World Echo (Documentary)	8:30	Serie — Les Compagnons De L'Aventure
4:30	The Famous Five	9:10	Documentary — Earth Revealed
5:00	News Flash	10:00	Blizzard Island
5:02	Our World Their World — Documentary	10:30	News Flash
5:15	All The Children	11:15	The Adventures + Kelly
		12:00	French Programme
			Document — Ushuaia
			Le Journal
			Magazine — Sports Et Musique
			News Headlines
			Bakersfield P.D.
			Super Stars Of Action
			N.B.A. Basketball
			News In English
			Bugs
			Hart To Hart
			Who's The Boss?

RENDEZVOUS WITH ART

Art Exhibition on Floppy Disk, but with a soul

Applying four decades' worth of talent and achievement, renowned Palestinian artist Ismail Shammout takes a sabbatical from his traditional medium of oil-on-canvas, plunging into the world of microchips & cordless mice, stunning even the Microsoft people with his artistic applications and technical innovations.

By Mahmoud I. Mufti

"MY CHILDREN — God bless them — have always been kind and generous to their mother and I. However, when on my 58th birthday in 1988, they came bearing a pocket-size electronic organiser as a gift, my life was to change forever (at least my professional, artistic life)," says artist Ismail Shammout. "They told me it was perfect for storing addresses, telephone numbers, and short notes," he added, continuing: "I sighed gratefully, but explained to them that I was not about to study and memorise an instructions-manual that bore an uncanny resemblance to a copy of the Yellow Pages, in size, weight and diversity. They wouldn't hear of it: I succumbed, and they undertook to guide me through the 'techno-maze' that I had been dreading. The spirit of youth!"

Surprisingly, the learning experience, far from being excruciating, in fact proved to be pleasurable and stimulating. The children started me off at the most rudimentary level: the a.b.c.'s of the trade, so to speak. My inse-

curity rapidly diminished and I was flabbergasted by how a calculator-sized gadget could store and organise, in such easily-retrievable format, hundreds of addresses and numbers. It was simply mind-boggling!"

Predictably, the contents of the noisy birthday-gift wrapper were to herald a new dawn in the life of the seasoned artist, signalling his first early interest in the enormous potential of computer technology and eventually, art-graphics by computer. And here started the stimulation of an already brilliant and sensitive mind that had, for over 40 years, applied oil-brush to canvases to chronicle the aspirations and tragedies of human beings in our region. Armed with the most valuable asset any man could dream of — a wife who truly believed in him and relentlessly encouraged him, (herself a highly accomplished artist)

Mr. Shammout embarked on a perilous voyage through which he contributed — in no way less than academic historians — in the chronicling of the half-century plight of the Palestinian people, inclu-

sive of the more recent Intifada.

Hand-in-hand with Tamam Akhal, his radiantly beautiful wife, the artist travelled the Arab World and some Western countries, drawing inspiration and inspiring others, depicting his and other Palestinians' experiences of Diaspora; emotional and physical scattering; dispersal of families; loss of families; building and rebuilding of lives; living the tragedies... yet sustained by hope. Amidst despair, they retained their right to hope. As long as they were alive and could contribute something to human society, hope remained a pulsating notion within.

Thus... watered with love, sharpened by tragedy and stimulated by a nationalistic conscience, the work of Ismail Shammout grew and matured. Recollecting his first exhibition ever, the Lydda-born artist recounts: "On a ping-pong table in a community-shack in the Khan Younis camp, Gaza — where I had moved as a refugee from Lydda — I held my first 'makeshift' art exhibition during my teen years. However, my first 'real' exhibition came later, in 1953, also in Gaza."

The artistic school that defines the work of Mr. Shammout is the academic one, though as with any artist of distinctive creative character, his work is ultimately a creation from deep within; a distinct amalgam that is instantly recognisable as 'Ismail Shammout', lending itself to expressionism within the academic



Palestinian graphic artist at work on one of his designs

school. As such, there is little abstraction in his work; all depictions are clear and discernible. However, the freedom of interpretation and imagination normally lavished on the viewer in abstract art is recompensed in a different manner to the same viewer in Shammout's work.

A depiction of children gathered under an olive tree, for instance, insinuates a deeper meaning than that associated with a Friday picnic in a luscious orchard. "A drawing such as this portrays the innocence and consequently, the vulnerability of youth and childhood. It carries deep undertones relating to the longevity and protectiveness of the mighty olive tree, under whose branches the children are huddled up. They are full of hope, and the overall aura seems to be one that celebrates the simple and beautiful things in life; serene moments. However, as 'can' be noticed, this depiction is accompanied in several sister-works displayed next to it, by one particular variant of the same work, rendered in dark colours, alluding to the onset of dusk.

Allegorically, this can be taken to imply that the serenity portrayed in the bright and sunny scene — with sunshine known to be a reassuring feature to children — has given way to the uncertainty and potential peril of the night; darkness also known to be a perturbing aspect to most children. In the bigger picture of life, the sentiments exuded in the sequential works of a particular series (usually 4 or 5 in this exhibition), can be taken to imply that "the moment cannot last," (i.e. tranquil and safe moments in our lives), or more optimistically, "the moment may not last." And so each of the exhibited works tells its own tale...

Another series of 5 or 6 works depicts young prisoners clad in white detention-garments, stone-throwing adolescents of the Intifada. They are crumpled together in prison, with beards already sprouting. Yet through the enclosing metal grid-work of the chamber's windows, sparkles of light, reflecting a proliferation of the spectrum's colours, penetrate and loom overhead, not

much unlike light penetrating the brilliantly-coloured stained glass of churches. And true enough, as in the churches, the effect is a spiritual one. The young men's camaraderie seems somehow strengthened by this spirituality. The scope for interpretation here, again, is not in the realm of the form — for the latter is one of near-realism — but in the poetry of the depiction. The light-clusters and rays may, to some viewers, appear as symbols of hope and ultimate justice. To others, the emphasis might be in the area of the aesthetic value accorded to the work in otherwise dark and sombre surroundings, for how else could a jail-interior be...

Distinguishing this collection of works, as well as those of several preceding exhibitions in recent years, is a shift in focus from depictions of misery and suffering alone, to a new blend that balances the latter aspects with — for the first time in 40 years — innuendoes of celebration, youth and innocence. The sense of celebration engendered here seems to revolve around the prospect, however distant (but at least vaguely plausible now) of a triumph of the human spirit; the prospect of long-yearned national dignity in the form of statehood for the Palestinian people. The same sense of subtle celebration also reverberates with a tribute to the now young men and women of Palestine, whose years of youth, spent in the cause of all notions of childhood. They are the generation whose childhoods were robbed. Finally, the same sense of celebration reposes prospects for long-term healing of wounds in the "innocence" of the younger children. These are some of the myriad human poetic sentiments characterising the artist's current exhibits.

"So at the time, 1988/89 — as I had just begun mastering the use of the 'controls and switches' of my new electronic pocket-organiser — I was also busy with a book I was working on, entitled 'Art in Palestine,' featuring (along with accompanying text) pictures of artworks by more than 500 Palestinian artists who lived in Palestine and

practised their art and/or studied art there during the period 1948-1988. These included established artists as well as rising ones, and even those who produced scattered art and were forced by their circumstances to immerse themselves in other jobs that would ensure basic sustenance for their families. Yet no one can say their work was inconsequential, for they too were children of the same general set of life-experiences, with some of them responsible for highly accomplished artistic work. Additionally, my book included factual information on where these people were born, where and how some of them died, where they lived and studied, etc."

Mr. Shammout was in something of a quandary in view of all the data he was juggling and attempting to articulate with a decent sense of flow and logic. Recognising the potential for organisational chaos, was an insightful and perceptive nephew of his, who urged him to learn some basic word-processing and tabulation-skills on the computer in order to store his ever-increasing and altering inventory of information. The nephew himself was a fresh graduate in Computer Studies, and subsequently undertook to tutor his uncle for an hour or two, after work, every single day. The days went by, and finally, after much lobbying and nagging by his children and nephew, Mr. Shammout succumbed once again by giving his consent to being gifted a computer with all the necessary accessories. Bestriding by the implications of this concession, he was now armed with the equipment and the basic (but fast ballooning) skills. Imagination alone was the limit as to what was next to follow.

"I was quick to discover the totally new dimensions of existence that the computer was capable of offering: virtually infinite horizons. I experimented in every way and manner that I could think of — and in 1990, by which time I was living in Kuwait — I found myself trapped in my house for prolonged periods during the problems that the country witnessed at the time. I consequently had loads of time to spend

and innovate. I basically remained glued, more or less, to my computer, and worked and worked.... I started delving into the available drawing and painting software: Corel Draw and tributary-programmes such as Photo Paint, Photo Shop, Painter, Paint-brush, Photo Shop Pro., etc.

The tools were all there, but instead of pencil, charcoal, paper, brush, palette-knife, oil-paints, turpentine and so forth (in the physical sense), all of them were there in the computer's software programmes (in the electronic sense). As I began attaining a mastery of the tools of application, the drawing or painting wasn't all that much different. What was a little disconcerting at first was that one would be drawing with a pencil-like mouse on a special sensor-pad, at elbow-level, while having to maintain one's gaze far above, on the computer-monitor. With perseverance and practice, that snag was soon thereafter overcome as well."

From that point on, it was more or less 'smooth sailing' for Mr. Shammout; the computer nightmare was steadily unfolding into technical mastery of a new language: an electronic one. His acquisition, in 1994, of a cordless mouse that functioned like a pen was a great relief over the traditional slide-and-click mouse that he had used for five years earlier. It was then that the full lustre of his artistic prowess started shining through again. He had cleared the hurdles and his creativity just poured out. As for colours, the programme supplied over 16 million shades and hues! The thickness and texture of lines drawn using the pencil-mouse could be custom-adjusted to extremely fine tolerances. "It was a case of who would control who: man over machine, or machine over man?" explains the artist. "And when the work started coming through, the style was absolutely recognisable as mine, as were the themes, needless to say. Only the medium and final effect differed."

Explaining some of the advantages of computer-art, the artist pointed out that on exactly the same day and in the same instant as his exhibition opened in Amman (6:00 pm, Tuesday, November 26, 1996), an identical one opened in Jerusalem at the Wasiti Art Centre. In other words, the new technology — rather, the newly-harnessed technology — allowed the replication of the exhibition, rendering its exhibits accessible to more people. The entire works are stored on several ordinary high-capacity floppy disk, allowing an exhibition, in principle, to be held in an unlimited number of countries simultaneously!

"I always envied poets and writers," says the artist, expounding that "whenever they [the poets and writers] are invited anywhere to a literary colloquium or recital, they would just stuff their written work in their pockets and take off! With

visual artists such as myself, we always have to clear major logistical hurdles in order to set up an exhibition in another country or location within the same country: transportation of the works, insurance, framing and packaging, loading and unloading, finding suitable temporary storage-places for them and ensuring they are appropriately supervised, etc. However, with the immense practicality of disk-storable and retrievable artwork, a major exhibition can be set up anywhere in the world in less than a week (normally unheard of in the case of conventional art mediums).

Furthermore, my conventional oil paintings command high prices that a lot of people cannot afford; yet they still want to own something by Ismail Shammout. These works are necessarily expensive, in large part because each one is unique; no replicas. In contrast, graphics works by computer, as in this exhibition, are significantly less expensive and can consequently enter more and more homes (and hopefully give more joy to more people). And they are nonetheless still Ismail Shammout limited-edition works. The number varies between no more than 10 to 20 copies per graphic-work." Thereafter, all electronic records of them are erased (and the process authenticated in a readily-verifiable manner), just as a conventional graphic artist destroys the zinc or copper plates once he/she has printed the allotted number of works in the limited series.

When all is said and done, one conclusion prevails more persistently than all others: the artist's recent achievement of technical sophistication has not taken place at the expense of his work's main theme: the plight of the Palestinians. With more and more of his works now entering more and more homes, the sad as well as smiling face of the Palestinian national experience will inevitably touch and move more people, helping in keeping the "cause" more frequently and vividly on people's minds. But it is a message not only for, and on behalf of Palestinians. It is a cry for mankind; a tribute to fallen patriots; a serenade to survivors; an appeal for a much-needed practicable, enforceable, non-theoretical universal code of ethics, dignity and justice between nations. Political analysts have been known to concur at times that morality is perhaps, after all, a private personal concept not applicable between nations. If this is true, then perhaps it can change one day, and perhaps through his highly arresting and evocative visual art, Ismail Shammout is — in his own way — one of the many pioneers of such change.

The exhibition, organised by Darat Al Funun, will continue until December 24th at 'Muntada Shoman.' Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, First Circle, opposite the Iraqi Embassy, daily 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (except Fridays).



Computer graphics by Ismail Shammout

Moroccan director breaks taboos over sex

By Wafa Bennani Reuter

RABAT — When Moroccan director Mohammed Lotfi's film opened in Casablanca, scenes showing a kiss, semi-nudity and love-making provoked shocked cries, then silence.

But Lotfi has no regrets about the ambiguous reception.

Rhesus, The Blood Of The Other was meant to break taboos on AIDS and question the idea that foreigners are the main conveyors of the disease.

It opened last month in Casablanca, Morocco's

financial centre, but Lotfi's problems started well before then.

"Many actresses were afraid to be identified with the parts and asked me to take out the most revealing scenes," he told Reuters in an interview.

"But I did not want to spare viewers but to wake them up. I think that a director since he has the means to reach people is committed to make them aware of dangers."

Nudity and making love before or outside marriage are generally seen as un-Moroccan, but Lotfi disputes this: "I showed people drink-

ing alcohol and making love because that's the way life is in Morocco. We do not live differently."

His central character, Abdou, played by Moroccan actor, played by Moroccan actress Nadia El Jaouhari, praised in a review in the newspaper Le Quotidien this month for her courage in tackling the part.

"She is the first actress to have succeeded in breaking the wall of the taboo which paralyses our society," said reviewer Adil Houdar.

with a Canadian. "It would have been too easy to blame his infection on her (the Canadian)," said Lotfi, but this would have only added to the perception of AIDS as a disease of foreigners.

Abdou's fiancée, Amal, is played by Moroccan actress Nadia El Jaouhari, praised in a review in the newspaper Le Quotidien this month for her courage in tackling the part.

"She is the first actress to have succeeded in breaking the wall of the taboo which paralyses our society," said reviewer Adil Houdar.

His comments contrasted with one typical remark from one of the six cinemas at which the film is now playing:

"It was worth doing and well done but some scenes should be removed... They do not square with our society."

Lotfi, 57, who graduated from the Paris-based Institut Des Hautes Etudes Cinematographiques (IDHEC) in the early 1960s, said he believed showing love-making on screen was an essential part of the movie.

As AIDS brings isolation, depression and

finally death to Abdou, Lotfi said: "It is a way to show that one must think twice before shattering one's life for mere moments of pleasure."

"Rhesus, le Sang De l'Autre" is the Moroccan director's first full-length fictional film aimed at a popular audience.

Before tackling the 93-minute movie, Lotfi said he had acted as production assistant in foreign films, including Oedipus The King by Pier Paolo Pasolini.

He had also shot documentaries, ranging from Testament Of A Poet, to Safeguarding The Town Of Fez and The Mines Of

Morocco.

He said that financing his film, even with a modest budget of four million dirhams (\$465,000) proved difficult: "I got help from the Centre Cinematographique Marocain and I had to get the rest from sponsors."

Some of the actors helped him keep within his budget: "Some agreed to play in the movie below their usual fee..." he said.

"People complain about the poor quality of Moroccan films but finance has a lot to do with that... We should get subsidies from the state to be able to improve

them."

Lotfi's film ran in the Carthage Film Festival in neighbouring Tunisia where it won warm reviews. The film is to be released soon in Tunisia, he said.

The director's next film is also likely to provoke controversy. He has a title — Souad Or A Moroccan Divorce. It will deal with the way divorce takes place in the Moroccan environment and its effects on women.

"I think I'll need at least two or three years to make it ready. I am still working on the scenario," he said.

AIDS 1996 — a round up of issues

By James Deane and Jill Shipway

Why has HIV spread?

LONDON — It has been fifteen long years since the first cases of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) were reported. Since then, some 5.8 million people have died of it worldwide. Another 27.9 million have contracted HIV, the virus that causes the disease.

But while most of the news of AIDS remains profoundly worrying, 1996, for the first time, gave rise to some reasons for hope — relatively inexpensive treatments of sexually transmitted diseases were shown to reduce the rate of HIV spread and there were major scientific breakthroughs in treating AIDS.

The struggle against AIDS, however, is far from over. If anything, signs of hope are tempered by the fact that the pandemic — still probably in its early stages — continues its sweep across regions and cultures. It is accelerating most rapidly in Asia.

By July 1995, there were 21.8 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, over 90 per cent of them in developing countries. Here are some facts about AIDS in developing countries:

Where and how many?

Although it has often been said that Asia is becoming the epicentre of AIDS, Africa continues to carry the greatest burden. More than five per cent of all people aged between 15 and 49 years in sub-Saharan Africa now live with HIV, and a total of 13 million people in Africa are HIV-positive.

Some African countries are far more affected than others. In Malawi, an estimated 13 per cent of the adult population is thought to be HIV-positive, according to the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS). In Zimbabwe and Zambia the figure reaches 17 per cent.

By 1995, over half of all new infections of HIV worldwide were in South East Asia — a total of two-and-a-half million people. South and South East Asia now have an estimated 4.8 million adults living with HIV/AIDS — approximately half a per cent of the region's population.

In some countries, the infection has spread faster than others. In the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh, for example, estimates of HIV-infection among blood donors have risen from less than 0.1 per cent in 1991 to about 10 per cent in 1995.

The Caribbean too remains a seriously affected region with 1.4 per cent of people estimated to be HIV-positive.

Good news and bad news

Bald statistics disguise some of the good news about the AIDS pandemic.

In 1996, for the first time since the AIDS pandemic began, real signs of hope began to emerge. In Uganda and other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, as among some high-risk populations in Thailand, there were inconsistent but nevertheless signs that the epidemic is slowing.

Condom use in many of the most severely affected countries increased dramatically and education and other initiatives, such as those which empower women, may be beginning to work. Low cost treatments of sexually transmitted diseases were shown to reduce the rate of HIV spread. Science made major strides in treating AIDS.

However, funding for AIDS prevention, and for health care in general, continues to be the target of cuts in public expenditure.

President Bill Clinton's unofficial presidential campaign theme in 1992 — "it's the economy, stupid" — applies equally to the spread of HIV in developing countries.

The underlying reasons for this pandemic are poverty and inequality. Economic underdevelopment and poverty are the reasons why health infrastructures are weak, why migration and population movement is great, why education is poor and illiteracy rates are high.

In addition, there are social and political inequalities, particularly between men and women. These factors are common to all the countries and communities most affected by HIV, and therefore determine the success of efforts made to contain the pandemic.

Sex and drugs and... STDs

If there is one major cause of the rapid spread of HIV in poorer countries, it is sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), largely the result of massively under-resourced health services. Many STDs cause sores, ulcers or inflammations on genitals, which make for easy transfer of HIV during sex. Worldwide, over 330 million people contract a curable but nevertheless dangerous STD every year.

Treating STDs could be an important part of the solution. In Mwanza, Tanzania, a three-year project that improved services for STD treatment, including the provision of low-cost drugs, was shown to decrease HIV transmission by 40 per cent.

Experts warn that such projects should not be seen as a "magic bullet" against AIDS in developing countries — patterns of STDs differ from region to region and STD-control is no substitute for addressing the underlying social and economic problems that encourage the spread of HIV. However, these dramatic results have shown how intensive and consistent health projects can be made to work against AIDS.

Hitting gold dust?

The year 1996 will probably go down as a landmark-year in efforts to combat AIDS. Already, there are whispers in the corridors of research institutions that a cure for AIDS could soon be found.

The reason for this optimism is "combination therapy," which involves people with HIV/AIDS taking combinations of drugs, including special classes of drugs called protease inhibitors and nucleotide analogues, such as AZT.

Trials with combination therapy have shown dramatic results, with some patients seeing their "viral load" — the amount HIV in their body — reduced to undetectable levels.

But these advances seem to have little relevance to developing countries. One year of treatment costs approximately \$12,000, and it is possible that the treatments will have to continue for the rest of a patient's life. These costs are beyond the health budgets of many industrialised countries. For developing countries, where the costs of providing even basic drugs such as Aspirin can be a challenge, the new drugs are simply unobtainable.

"One month's treatment of AZT costs an average Ugandan the same as his entire year's income," says Dr. Peter Mugenyi of the Joint Clinical Research Centre in Uganda.

The story is similar even in the comparatively wealthier Thailand. "We can't supply the drug to all of HIV-positive patients; we supply to those who have symptoms," says Dr. Somsit Tansuphaswadikul, a general practitioner in

Bangkok.

"If you look in the journals they all say the same thing — treat as early as you can. But in this country we can't afford that," he says.

UNAIDS, the U.N. body responsible for coordinating international action against AIDS, has begun discussions with drug companies and AIDS organisations to examine how drugs can be made more affordable in developing countries, but the prospects of providing significantly greater access to the most expensive treatments look poor.

Vaccines: Testing testing, 1, 2, 3

The best medical solution to HIV/AIDS for developing countries would be an effective, affordable vaccine — something which could be administered once and could protect for life.

Early optimism about developing a vaccine against AIDS faded in the 1980s and early 1990s, but recent scientific developments have sparked new hopes for the eventual deployment of an effective vaccine. There are, however, formidable problems ahead.

Although perhaps 20 potential vaccines against HIV and AIDS have been developed, none has yet been proved to have worked against HIV in humans. As a result, drug companies who in the mid-1980s pumped millions of dollars into AIDS vaccine research, say they have seen no profits. There is a looming crisis in funding for further vaccine development.

A major problem in vaccine development is that of testing. Testing of some of the vaccines which have been developed has proved controversial. Three developing countries — Thailand, Uganda and Brazil — have offered to take part in tests to find out if the vaccines are safe and if they can offer any protection against HIV. Tests have already started in Thailand, and a recent meeting in Kampala of HIV/AIDS specialists agreed that trials should now go ahead in Uganda.

But while it is clear that these tests will help scientists get a better understanding of how a vaccine might work, there are some doubts over whether these vaccines will actually protect Ugandan or Thai people.

The problem lies in the capacity of HIV to mutate into different strains. There are two main forms of HIV — HIV1 and HIV2. The most virulent and widespread form, HIV1, has mutated into at least nine different strains — labelled from strain 'A' through to 'H' (plus another strain 'O') — and each strain tends to cluster in particular regions.

While the vaccines which have been developed are designed to combat the 'B' strain of HIV, which is found mainly in North America and Europe, countries such as Uganda and Thailand are more heavily affected by other strains (such as 'A', 'D' and 'E'). The difficulty is in ensuring that a vaccine which protects against the 'B' strain can also protect against the others.

Evidence has been building that such "cross protection" is possible, particularly with one specific "canarypox" vaccine. This has protected against both HIV1 and HIV2 in experiments on monkeys, suggesting that protection against all forms of HIV may be achievable. This vaccine is being tested in Uganda.

Such a vaccine remains a long way off, however, and the current trials could be the last — and best — chance to develop a vaccine against AIDS before funding dries up.

According to the Rockefeller Foundation in New York, the international community spends \$10 billion a year on AIDS prevention and research, two billion of which goes on research into treatment generally. Of this, \$160 million is spent on vaccine research, and just \$5 million on vaccine research in developing countries.

Women on the frontline

It is no coincidence that so many AIDS organisations have been founded by women. Women are particularly susceptible to HIV — over 50 per cent of new HIV infections in Africa occur in women and this proportion is growing steadily.

At its most basic, women have few means of protection against their husband or partner or, in the case of female sex workers, customers.

The most effective technology yet developed against the spread of HIV is still the condom. The problem for women who want to protect themselves against HIV is that they have little power to ensure that their husbands or partners wear condoms during sex.

One area of research is the development of microbicides or virucides — substances which can be applied to the vagina before sex and which can effectively destroy or disable HIV before it enters the body. These can be used at a woman's discretion. Research is also being carried out to develop products which may kill HIV but could allow conception.

Research on microbicides and virucides has run into a number of problems. There are concerns that they could cause inflammation to the vagina, thus enhancing the potential transmission of HIV, and it is unclear how affordable they are likely to be, especially in developing countries. However, research on at least two microbicides is underway at present, and future prospects for their development seem increasingly good.

Is breast best?

Breastfeeding is universally acknowledged as the best form of nutrition for new born babies, particularly in the developing world where children fed on formula milk are many times more likely to die from diarrhoeal and respiratory diseases than those who are breastfed.

For mothers who are HIV-positive, however, breastfeeding may present a greater risk of infection than was previously thought. Preliminary research conducted in South Africa suggests that breastfeeding increases the risk of transmission of HIV from mother to child by 28 per cent.

However, bottle-feeding of babies with formula feed in situations where clean water cannot be guaranteed, and where the sterilisation of bottles is difficult can be far more hazardous than breastfeeding, even if the mother is HIV-positive. It has been calculated that if African mothers stopped breastfeeding the death rate in under-fives would

double.

Growing evidence of the risks of transmission of HIV through breastmilk has prompted UNAIDS to revise its policy on breastfeeding. It stresses that HIV-positive women should be encouraged to decide for themselves whether they want to breastfeed or not. To help them decide, they should be provided with "the best available information on the benefits of breastfeeding, on the risk of HIV transmission through breastfeeding, and on the risks and possible advantages associated with other methods of infant feeding."

It's still in the blood

Fifteen years into the pandemic, up to 10 per cent of new HIV infections in developing countries are caused by blood transfusions. The most basic measure that a country can take against HIV — safeguarding blood supply from infection — has still not been achieved in many developing countries.

The main reason is cost — many countries believe that achieving a truly safe blood system is too expensive. A single transfusion of blood relying on volunteer donors and using safe and sterile equipment in hospital costs an estimated £20-30.

Another problem is testing blood for HIV. Laboratory tests are not totally reliable, particularly in developing countries where testing kits need to be refrigerated and where there is a shortage of trained technicians to carry out tests properly. In Pakistan 12 per cent of new HIV infections in 1992 were from blood transfusions — less than half of its blood banks were found to have HIV screening equipment. In both Pakistan and India, the problem is particularly acute as health authorities rely on paid rather than voluntary blood donors. Paid donors often have a high risk of contracting HIV through their lifestyles. Authorities in both countries have now begun to take measures to clean up their blood supplies.

One way to save money is to ask donors questions about previous experiences which might have exposed them to HIV. It is much easier to get honest answers from volunteers than from paid donors. This in turn reduces the need for expensive tests. One of the poorest countries in the world, Uganda, recently declared its blood supplies safe after an intensive programme funded by the European Union.

In the long run, achieving safe blood supplies will depend on people donating blood for free. Giving blood is safe in virtually all countries and is one of the most valuable contributions a citizen can make to combating AIDS.

A generation at risk?

For most of those who will contract HIV in the coming year, there has not been a time when they have not lived in the shadow of the AIDS epidemic. Over half of all new infections of HIV are taking place in young people aged between 15 and 24. For this generation, the risk of HIV has become a fact of life. Together with today's young generation, the epidemic is coming of age.

The high number of young people affected by AIDS is partly because the world's population is a young one — in developing countries young people constitute at least 50 per cent of the population. But this is just part of the story. Most fundamentally, young people are contracting HIV out of ignorance — of sex in general and the risks of unsafe sex in particular.

For most AIDS organisations, the answer lies in sex education. "We have a window of hope between the ages of 5 and 18 years" according to Dr. Sam Okware, Uganda's Commissioner for Health. "If that group can be educated to ensure they do not have risk behaviour, I think we have a future."

But sex education has become a moral, religious and political minefield in many countries. There are relatively few studies which show how sex education is being carried out and what it is achieving in developing countries. The most common objection to sex education is that it encourages earlier sexual activity. However, where research has been done — mostly in the USA and Europe — it has been consistently shown that sex education either delays the age of first intercourse, or makes no difference.

Adolescents are not the only young people affected by AIDS. Over nine million children have lost their mothers to AIDS, 90 per cent of them in sub-Saharan Africa. One in three children orphaned by AIDS is under the age of five.

TB and HIV: The deadly liaison

Around one in three people on Earth is infected with the tuberculosis (TB) germ. Although TB remains dormant in most people — only 5-10 per cent tend to develop active tuberculosis — TB is resurgent throughout the world and claims the lives of around three million people each year, mostly in Africa and Asia.

"The AIDS epidemic and the TB epidemic are locked in a vicious circle of mutual reinforcement," according Dr. Peter Piot, director of UNAIDS. Millions of TB carriers who would otherwise have escaped active tuberculosis are now developing the disease because their immune system is under attack from HIV. And the increasing numbers of people with TB means that even more people are becoming infected. TB is now the commonest cause of death in HIV-positive people, and the WHO estimates that globally eight per cent of TB is HIV-associated.

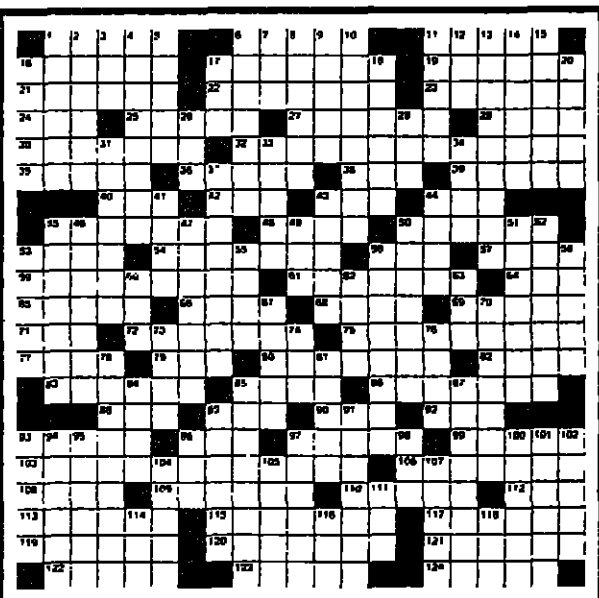
Nearly all cases of TB are curable with existing drugs even when the patient is HIV-positive, but TB control in developing countries is, according to UNAIDS, "woefully underfunded." This is despite estimates from the World Bank that TB and HIV prevention are among the most cost-effective of all public health activities. The increasing number of people with active TB is being compounded by the emergence of "multi-drug resistant" TB — a form of the disease which is far more lethal than earlier forms. Cases resistant to all major TB drugs have been reported in the USA, South Africa and India.

The problem may not simply be one of funding. There have been accusations from WHO that some drug companies have compounds "on the shelf" which are active against TB, but are not developing them into drugs because of poor commercial profits — Panos Feature.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

CATCH OF THE DAY
By Frederick T. Buhler

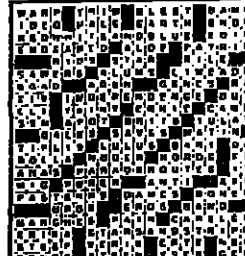
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DIAGRAMLESS, 19x19
By Chuck Deedee

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SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Mild but brave school bus driver picked up rude students and took them to class picnic.
2. Oral portion of final exam for philosophy class was extremely quiet. All the questions were rhetorical.
3. My shifty grifter liked to deal cards from bottom of the deck, but one bullet changed his outlook.
4. Some puffed-up political debates are a battle between unnamed contestants.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. ACPJDN QXSPQH CQPKU CUXKXI WSH
KXJH QEI CXLKH C J BKV CWOJDLW
AKUR WJYH. — By Earl Ireland
2. OW KLE WAKS WCS CULHFWALZ EL WCS
BOKK ROT KXALENT. LER AWIT PWS
GATZWALZ XZPPAWA. — By R.C. Doyle
3. TV CMMIC CMMUN VAYER DUNE VNH
PAXY "RAD WRAP" EC OBRUVSTAN
IXXW. — By Ed Thudron
4. WRRFUTO UNIG GHT WHP NR WSH NOGN
FIGHT NR HSH. — By Frank N. Stein

ANSWERS

- pendous.
3. One versed in the art of memory.
 4. Centre of the chin.
 5. Stalagmites are formed on the floor of a cave. Stalactites hang from the roof.
 6. Faneuil Hall, Boston, was rebuilt after its destruction by fire from the proceeds of lotteries.
5. Jazz.
2. hazardous, tremendous, horrendous, portentous, stu-

Countdown starts for Iraq's return to oil market

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The countdown started Wednesday for Iraq's return to the international oil market as U.N. experts visited the border with Turkey for the last technical inspection before the launch of the oil-for-food deal.

"We are at the last stage of the inspection of technical installations in Iraq," a U.N. official in Baghdad told AFP, just days ahead of the arrival of U.N. monitors to be deployed at pumping stations in northern and southern Iraq.

Two oil experts from the Dutch company Saybolt visited the Kurdish-held northern Iraqi town of Zakho on Wednesday to inspect repairs to a metering station for Iraq's main oil export pipeline.

Saybolt is in charge of monitoring Iraq's oil exports under the U.N. oil-for-food deal, while Lloyd's of London is to supervise imports of humanitarian goods aimed at easing the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Three Lloyd's employees Tuesday wrapped up an inspection tour of customs posts on the Turkish and Jordanian borders as well as on the Gulf. They are to report back soon to the United Nations, along with the Saybolt team.

"After the reports, the United Nations is to set a date for implementation of the accord," said the U.N. official, asking not to be named. He said the issue of lodgings for U.N. staff in Iraq is also in the process of being settled.

Iraqi officials say they expect oil exports to resume, for the first time in six years, between Dec. 10 and 15.

In New York, Ambassador Paolo Fulci of Italy, the current U.N. Security Council president, said Tuesday that the oil-for-food agreement "hopefully will begin to be implemented this month."

The Security Council was awaiting the final green light from the U.N. secretary general once the Saybolt experts have reported that the Zakho metering station had been repaired to international standards.

The report is expected "at the latest at the end of this week," said Mr. Fulci. "Then we will wait anxiously for the secretary general (Boutros Ghali) to give the signal."

The accord, signed in May but delayed by a political tug-of-war between Baghdad and Washington, comes into force the day after Mr. Ghali informs the council that all preparations have been completed.

Mr. Fulci warned that "any delay means the death from starvation" of more Iraqi civilians. "We will not let one day be lost in this implementation to save innocent human lives," he said.

The deal allows Iraq, which has been under crippling sanctions since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, to export \$2 billion worth of oil every six months to purchase food and medicine for the civilian population.

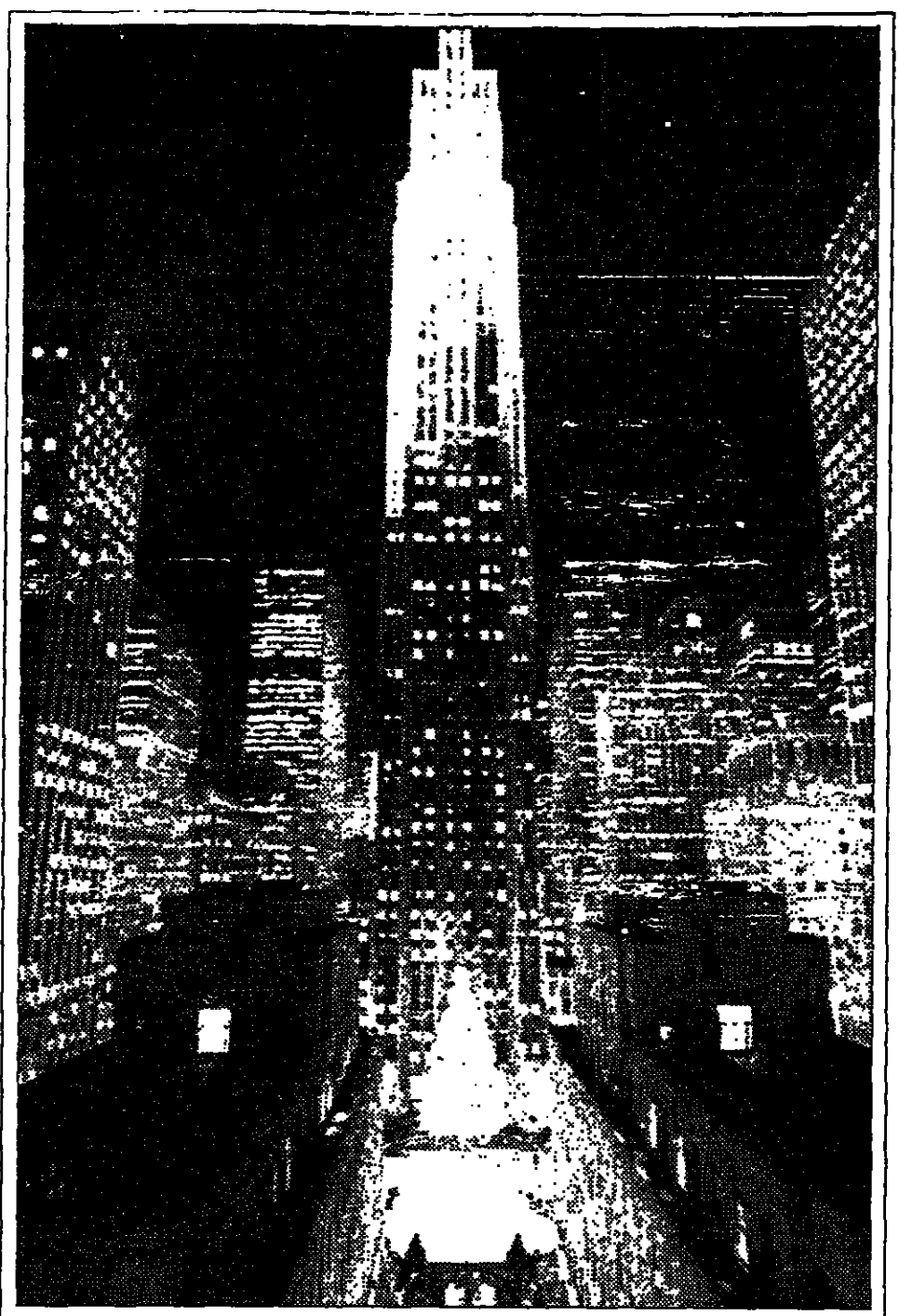
The money raised from oil sales will also go to defray U.N. costs and to pay for war reparations stemming from the invasion.

Iraqi Oil Minister Amer Rashid has said Baghdad is due to sign "before the end of the week" contracts with more than 50 oil companies. Baghdad will export around 500,000 barrels a day, depending on international market prices.

The French oil company Total has said it plans to lift some 30,000 barrels a day of Iraqi oil.

The United Nations is to deploy a total of 205 international monitors and inspectors, including 32 Lloyd's experts for the imports of humanitarian supplies and 14 Saybolt staff for the oil exports.

A total of 151 observers are to watch food distribution to ensure a fair share for all Iraqis, and the eight others are to be based at U.N. headquarters in New York.



CHRISTMAS TREE: A 27-metre Norway Spruce, holding 26,000 lights, stands above the skating rink dwarfed by New York's famed Rockefeller Centre shortly after being lit at the 64th annual ceremony Tuesday night. The Christmas tree remains lit throughout the Christmas season where it is one of the city's biggest tourist attractions (Reuters photo)

Morocco battles pollution threat

By John Baggaley
Reuters

RABAT — Within its medieval ochre walls, amid white buildings and green spaces there is little hint of the dangers facing the Moroccan capital Rabat or the rest of the north African country's environment.

But insidiously destroying its fabric, ruining Morocco's coast, and threatening its countryside, economy and health, pollution is being targeted as a relentless enemy that must be defeated.

Environment Minister Nouredine Ben Omar Alami says pollution is costing 20 billion dirhams (\$2.3 billion) a year and could largely be beaten by spending 4.6 billion dirhams a year which would bring annual economic benefits of 14.2 billion dirhams.

His ministry, set up four years ago in recognition of the problem, has since then had an army of specialists within it and from other ministries working on a strategy for the years 2005-2025 to achieve this.

So far, its main task has been to assess the size of the problem. Some of the findings are alarming.

"Rock near the main discharge station (on the coast) is burnt, eroded and denude of all form of life," says Abdelghani Chafik of the fisheries ministry, referring to waste pumped into the sea by edible oil, leather and phosphates industries.

While the phosphates earn foreign currency, local fishermen suffer, shellfish mutate, and waste and pollution threaten beaches which should be a magnet for the average three million, but falling, number of tourists visiting Morocco each year.

"The Medina (Rabat's old city) is heading for squalor...its historic attraction rapidly crumbling," one official said.

In the centre of Rabat, home to more than 750,000 people "the lead and dust content (of the air) in places is 200 per cent higher than world health organisation recommendations."

Rubbish is evident on parts of Morocco's 3,500 km of coast and passing ships empty their waste to make the Mediterranean the world's most polluted sea.

Stand by old quarries near Casablanca, the country's main financial centre, and watch 2,000 tonnes of waste a day being "disposed of pell-mell", tipped from a height of 10 metres to land where it will.

Pollution of the water table from the quarries extends 300 metres from some sites, say the specialists.

They have for the first time pinpointed endangered plants and animals, targeted 10 factories for help and reform in the most industrialised area, surveyed waste produced by the 27 million population, and set priorities to change its ways.

"In the end, the adoption of the most compelling principle, 'the polluter pays', will have to be envisaged for later..." minister Alami said.

One specialist said: "Each year in Morocco 3.9 million tonnes of solid household waste are produced in urban areas. Of the 85 per cent which is collected, only two per cent is recycled...The rest is dumped without control..."

Morocco's two per cent recycling figure compared, he said, with 35 per cent in France and 50 per cent for Belgium.

In Oued Sebou basin near the ancient city of Fez, pollution from olive processing is such that production of drinking water has reached "a critical state", said Mohamed Oubkace.

Morocco is the world's seventh major producer of olive oil, but at a cost. Waste from the oil plants, averaging 70,000 cubic metres a year, is such that during the olive season "the capacities of drinking water treatment plants" are submerged.

"During the olive season, production of drinking water by the station, in the best cases, only covers 50 per cent of drinking water needs," said Mohamed Saadallah.

Achille Lauro hijacker back in Italy

ROME (AFP) — Majed Al Mulki, leader of the Palestinian hijacking of the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro in October 1985, arrived in Rome Wednesday after his extradition from Spain, police said.

Sentenced to 30 years in prison in 1986, Mulki had disappeared on Feb. 28 after he failed to return from a 12-day leave from jail, which he had been granted in return for good behaviour.

He was apprehended on March 22 at the Spanish beach resort of Estepona, then held at Carabanchel prison in Madrid until the Spanish government approved his extradition at the end of November.

Mulki led a team of four Palestinians who seized the Achille Lauro, with 450 passengers on board plus crew, in the Mediterranean sea off Egypt to demand the release of 50 Palestinians in Israeli jails.

He was eventually convicted in a Genoa court for shooting an American passenger and dumping him off the ship. Italy's embarrassment over the affair was compounded by the fact that Mulki was the third member of the four-man Achille Lauro commando to disappear during a temporary excursion from prison.

Iran parliament bans use of foreign words

TEHRAN (AFP) — The Iranian parliament on Wednesday banned the use of foreign words in line with efforts to fight Western cultural inroads into the Islamic republic.

The legislation forbids the use of Western sounding words and phrases in speeches or writing in government offices, businesses or other public places.

The assembly, dominated by religious conservatives, commissioned the police to confront local manufacturers who use foreign names to label their products.

The aim of the ban is to "safeguard" the national language, "Farsi, and preserve the country's Islamic identity."

It comes amid concern over the growing use of Western words and phrases, notably English, by officials and businesses.

Producers of consumer goods often resort to Western sounding names to make their products more appealing especially to the young.

In fashionable districts of northern Tehran, young people often wear jackets or T-shirts bearing Western symbols or inscriptions and boutiques showcase similar clothing, including Rayban sunglasses and Caterpillar boots.

The High Council of the Cultural Revolution ordered last week that towns, streets, and other public places be named only after Iranian and Islamic personalities or sites.

The latest regulations institutionalise a trend against the use of foreign words to name public places since the 1979 Islamic revolution, which sought to eradicate all traces of Western culture from Iranian society.

Many businesses have since been forced to adopt new names and most streets have been renamed after fallen soldiers during the Islamic revolution or the 1980-1988 war against Iraq.

The parliament has commissioned the academy of national language to purify Farsi of all foreign words with such internationally-used words as computer, fax and helicopter having been replaced by their Farsi version.

But Arabic words are accepted as it is the language of the Holy Koran, and Iranian leaders frequently quote Arabic phrases from the Koran or other religious books in their public speeches.

An estimated 7,000 foreign words, mainly French and English, have found their way into the public vocabulary, including "dish," from satellite dishes, and "mini-jupe," the French word for mini-skirt.

The new law could strike a blow to manufacturers of counterfeit products who use famous Western designer labels to promote sales.

Israel unveils secret squad

TEL AVIV (AP) — Lifting its veil of secrecy, the Israeli army confirmed Wednesday that an elite Israeli squad named "Egoz" has been tracking guerrillas in South Lebanon for the past two years.

Foreign reports have said Egoz fighters were deployed behind the lines in South Lebanon, and that dozens of Hizbollah guerrillas have been killed in hand-to-hand combat with Egoz.

In May, the Observer newspaper said the squad had been indirectly responsible for triggering the April massacre at a U.N. base in Qana in South Lebanon in which at least 91 refugees died as a result of Israeli shelling.

At the time, Egoz fighters scouted the Qana area to spot Hizbollah members firing rockets at Israel, the British daily wrote. Fearing they had been detected, they rushed home for help and were ordered to withdraw.

Army commanders then ordered artillery to shell the area, the Observer report said. Egoz is Hebrew for Walnut. In the 1960s, a well-known commando unit by that name operated in Israel.

In an official announcement Wednesday, the Israeli army said Egoz was established two years ago as part of the Golani Brigade.

The unit specialises in guerrilla warfare in the field conditions of southern Lebanon to combat Hizbollah and other organisations," the statement said.

The Israeli army commander for northern Israel and southern Lebanon, Major-General Amiram Levine, presented the unit to Israeli military correspondents Wednesday.

Speaking on Israel Radio, Gen. Levine said the unit was "not a death squad." The radio said he was referring to foreign reports without specifying who might have made such a claim.

Gen. Levine said two members of the unit have been killed since it was created.

"What is special about this unit is that it concentrates exclusively on the fighting in Lebanon," he said.

Ministry says fair not its concern

(Continued from page 12)

go ahead as planned.

Part of the opposition to the exhibition has also come from businessmen who point out that Israel is impeding trade between Jordan and the Palestinian territories and, as such, the Kingdom should not be party to promoting business with the Jewish state as long as the situation remains unchanged.

Wednesday's Ministry of Industry and Trade statement said meanwhile that Jordan imported Israeli products worth JD 3 million while the Kingdom's exports to the Jewish state were worth JD 2.5 million.

"In view of the limited trade between the two countries, the ministry does not feel that Jordanian industries are threatened," said the statement. "Israeli products which have to compete with products from other countries cannot have any effect on our market," it said. At the same time, it said, Israeli products could not really compete with Jordanian products because of higher prices.

West warns Bosnians

(Continued from page 12)

NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana said the North Atlantic alliance planned to review the size of its international peacekeeping force in Bosnia next June and December with a view to reducing it substantially over 1997.

"We are planning for an 18-month mission, to be reviewed at six and 12 months, with a view to progressively reducing the forces' presence to a deterrent posture and eventually withdrawal," Mr. Solana said. The international community's high representative in Bosnia, Carl Bildt, said new measures might be used to arrest indicted war criminals still at large if the former warring parties refused to hand over suspects to the Hague war crimes tribunal.

"I believe that we need to consider new measures if no action is taken by the parties themselves," Mr. Bildt said.

Jordan, Israel expand tariff-free trade

(Continued from page 1)

their investments in each other's country.

They agreed to hold a meeting of experts in two weeks to discuss "all obstacles hindering the flow of goods between the two countries," the statement said.

Economy is much better than last year

(Continued from page 1)

at the Central Bank of Jordan rose to \$576 million by the beginning of November — 35 per cent over last year. The figure does not include gold reserves and shares in regional and international organisations.

Capitals of newly-registered companies at the Ministry of Trade and Industry rose to JD 721.4 million in comparison with JD 375.7 million for the same period last year (92 per cent growth) due to the privatisation of some of the state-owned entities.

Two hundred and fifty projects with a capital of JD329 million were launched in the first 11 months of this year in comparison with 107 projects (134 per cent growth rate). Total foreign capital in these projects was JD62.6 million this year in comparison with JD44 million last year.

Foreign debts were brought down from \$7,615 million in 1990 to \$6,495 million by the end of October this year.

For the first time interest on military debts has been included in the budget, he said. According to Mr. Awad, Jordan's economy has survived the phase of difficulties and challenges.

Barcelona process on course

(Continued from page 12)

projects in Jordan approved under the 1996 budget of MEDA democracy. Under the pillar of social, cultural and human affairs, several meetings took place following the Barcelona conference to encourage understanding between people and exchanges between civil societies.

Jordan-EU cultural cooperation is promoted through a number of European as well as joint Euro-Jordanian activities in Jordan, such as the annual film festival, the EU Chamber Orchestra which performed this month, a joint EU-Jordanian concert and a Euro-Arab jazz festival.

A Middle Eastern Chamber Orchestra is also expected to be set up in the Middle East.

Spanish Ambassador to Jordan Juan Manuel Cabrera, who attended the press conference, said Jordan was an active partner which is "very gratifying for Europe."

Mr. Gazzo concluded by saying that the Jordan-European partnership agreement is expected to be signed at the beginning of 1997 after both sides settle some issues pertaining to agriculture, intellectual property rights as well as rules of origin.

The EU has concluded partnership agreements with Morocco, Tunisia and Israel. Similar agreements are currently negotiated with Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinian National Authority.

down from 15 per cent last year. This reduction, according to the minister, is attributed to the opening of labour markets in other countries to Jordanians, especially the Gulf countries in 1996, in addition to the government's new policy in controlling foreign labour in the Kingdom, he said.

Unemployment among males had dropped from 12.6 per cent in 1995 to 11 per cent in 1996 and among females the rate dropped from 29.1 per cent in 1995 to 22 per cent in 1996.

The value of real estate dealings decreased by 14 per cent this year, depressing revenues from land registration fees and real estate tax.

Growth rate in national savings, total investment and local production was satisfactory, he said.

The cost of living index, according to the General Statistics Department, shows a relative increase in prices in comparison with the same period last year. It rose from 114.3 points last January to 117.7 points at the beginning of October this year.

Foreign currency reserves

Oil prices remain high despite imminent return of Iraqi crude

LONDON (AFP) — Crude oil prices remained high on Wednesday despite the imminent return of Iraqi crude to the international market.

Brent North Sea crude was being traded at \$23.70 per barrel late Wednesday afternoon. This was about one dollar higher than at the middle of last week, when the United Nations paved the way for a resumption of Iraqi exports.

The continued strength of oil prices is down to high consumption levels in the United States and northern Europe, where cold weather has caused demand for

heating oil to rise.

An oil analyst at the Kleinwort Benson Trading House, Paul Spedding, said that the high prices could be explained by "low crude and heating oil stocks in the United States." This has caused companies to increase imports.

Mr. Spedding said that bad weather in the Gulf of Mexico had also impeded shipments of crude to the United States.

Last Wednesday, the U.N. approved a price-fixing formula for the Iraqi oil, which was expected to flow on to the international market for the first time since Iraq

invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Iraq has itself revoked its final objections to a so-called oil-for-food deal with the U.N. The deal allows for limited sales of crude to finance humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people.

But the prospect of an additional 500,000 to 600,000 barrels of Iraqi oil arriving on the market every day has failed to unnerve the market.

The increased demand for oil has come at a time when stocks of crude in consumer countries have touched rock bottom, analysts said.

Oman gets loan for \$400m

MUSCAT (AFP) — Banks from Japan and other countries agreed Wednesday to lend Oman \$400 million to finance development projects, National Economy Minister Ahmad Abdul Nabi Mekki said.

The loan has an interest rate of 5.45 per cent and will be repaid in seven years, including a grace period, Mr. Mekki said after signing the agreement. He did not specify the period. "The terms of the loan are suitable. It comes within the planned borrowing programme in the current five-year development plan," he said.

The creditors include 10 Japanese banks, 13 banks from Europe, two from the United States and the rest from the Gulf and other Arab countries.

Mr. Mekki put Oman's debt at around \$3.64 billion and said there were no plans to exceed the borrowing limit of \$3.9 billion.

The projects to be financed include the southern port of Risot, which is being developed to face growing business. The latest loan will also be used to repay part of the Gulf country's debt, Mr. Mekki said.

Oman, which is not an OPEC member, produces around 900,000 barrels per day of crude and has been involved in major projects, covering petrochemicals, liquefied natural gas, sewage and other fields.

Euro launch in 1999 '90 % certain'

FRANKFURT (AFP) — The president of the European Monetary Institute, regarded as the future European central bank, has said that there is a "90 per cent chance" that the single currency will be launched on schedule on Jan. 1, 1999.

The Euro will "very probably" be launched on time, Alexandre Lamfalussy said in an interview Wednesday with the German mass circulation newspaper Bild.

"But I am not as certain as the financial markets. The chance is about 90 per cent, but not 100 per cent," he added.

Mr. Lamfalussy also said it would be possible "under certain conditions" to deviate from the Maastricht convergence criteria — "but only quite exceptionally and by a

very restrictive interpretation of the Maastricht Treaty."

He believed Germany had "good chances" of fulfilling the criterion that public deficits in 1997 be limited to three per cent of gross domestic product, but thought it "unlikely" that it would meet the one limiting the public debt to 60 per cent of GDP.

Mr. Lamfalussy declined to predict which countries will take part in the launch of the Euro. But he suggested Germany and France would, saying it was "unimaginable" without Germany. "For political reasons, at least one other big country will be there," he added.

The head of the European Monetary Institute also called for a fundamental reform of the old-age pen-

sion systems in Germany and France to restore lasting health to their public finances. He blamed electoral considerations for government hesitations so far.

But Mr. Lamfalussy said that a single currency would have a beneficial economic effect in the long term on unemployment levels.

The Frankfurt-based institute, meanwhile, said Wednesday that it had chosen draft designs for the future bank notes of the Euro, but that these were being kept secret pending their presentation to the European summit in Dublin December 13-14.

The designs would then be presented at simultaneous news conferences in Dublin and Frankfurt, the institute announcement said.

Algerian council debates 1997 budget

PARIS (R) — Algeria's National Transitional Council on Wednesday started discussing a draft budget that forecasts income of 829.4 billion dinars (\$15.08 billion) in 1997 with spending at 914.1 billion dinars (\$16.62 billion).

The official Algerian news agency APS quoted Finance Minister Abdelkrim Harchaoui as saying the budget also forecast five per cent economic growth in 1997 compared with an envisaged growth rate of 4.4 per cent in 1996.

Almost 95 per cent of OPEC member Algeria's foreign income comes from exports of oil and gas and APS said the budget was based on an average price of \$17.5 per barrel of oil.

The council is an unelected quasi-parliament, appointed by the authorities in the absence of an elected assembly and usually accepts government recommendations.

The draft budget, approved last month by the cabinet, forecasts inflation for 1997 at an annual rate of 10 per cent. Inflation for

this year was estimated at some 19 per cent.

President Liamine Zouari said last month that the budget would contain an increase in social spending for the poorest members of Algeria's 29 million population.

Algerian authorities have been engaged in a five-year conflict with Muslim fundamentalists whose ranks, according to officials, have been reinforced by young people affected by poverty. About 60,000 people have died in the violence. (\$1 = 55 dinars)

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Garret
- 6 George's veep
- 9 Leafy beet
- 14 Young insect
- 15 Vitamin bottle abbr.
- 16 Boring tool
- 17 Weaken
- 18 Dive
- 20 Poplars
- 22 —dieu (kneeling bench)
- 23 Meadow
- 24 Given free of charge
- 26 Skin: suff.
- 27 Former chess champion
- 30 Information
- 31 "Loves You" (Beatles tune)
- 33 Easygoing
- 35 Future oak
- 39 Ranch enclosures
- 40 Recent Olympics venue
- 42 Follow
- 43 Cafe blends
- 44 Wing
- 46 Reagan cabinet member
- 47 Volcano's plume
- 48 Betsy or Diana
- 51 Partially coincide
- 54 —carte
- 55 Twosome
- 56 Sonora snooze
- 60 Dive
- 63 Katmandu's land
- 64 Minty herb
- 65 Distortion
- 66 Webber musical
- 67 Nonsensical
- 68 Skit
- 69 —A (skincare compound)

DOWN

- 1 See 59D
- 2 Seals a driveway
- 3 Bunker
- 4 Like some walls
- 5 Dive
- 6 Great cager's nickname
- 7 Accustoms
- 8 Mother-of-pearl
- 9 Dessert slice
- 10 Attila, e.g.
- 11 Light on one's feet
- 12 Send to a specialist
- 13 Imagine
- 19 Toddlers
- 21 Fishhook attachment
- 25 Bowls over
- 26 43A option
- 27 Diplomacy
- 28 Omnia vincit —
- 29 Modena money
- 32 Dive
- 34 The Ram
- 36 Draft status
- 37 Itineraries: abbr.
- 38 "The Lama" rhymester
- 40 Rent — (airport offering)
- 41 Labors
- 45 Rye buy
- 46 Courageous
- 48 Jewish cleric
- 49 Allegheny River town
- 50 Spicy sauce
- 52 Country mansion
- 53 Annoy
- 55 Gomer or Ernie
- 57 Skewer
- 58 Actor Jacques
- 59 With 1D, "The Four Seasons" star
- 61 Author Yutang
- 62 Caress

by Chuck Deodene

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HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Have a discussion today with loved ones about mutual interests and be more aware of difficulties connected with them. Later this evening you will be able to discuss your career activities with knowledgeable people.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) This is a good day today to sit down with a fellow associate and see where you are both headed and devise a course of action which will be successful. Take it easy with your loved ones and have a pleasant time together.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You are able today to gain more benefits from whatever projects you are engaged in, so gather them in. Later this evening you can get together with fellow associates and devise a plan of action for mutual prosperity.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You are able to

enjoy recreations which you like the most today, be they athletic or romantic. Later this evening you can meet with close friends and have a fun time together in recreational activities which are relaxing.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Study your personal desires early today and then you can get a loved one to assist you in gaining them. Later tonight will be good to discuss your career activities with knowledgeable people and gain much success.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) If you are understanding with new acquaintances today they can be turned into fast and devoted friends, so make every effort to establish a good rapport. Later this evening you can go out on the town with your mate.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Look to individuals today of both sexes who

can assist you in some vital business project, so seek some critical advice. Later tonight you can meet with those in authority and discuss your career objectives for your success.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You have an advanced course of action you want to follow today, however, handle it from a different angle for best results. Later this evening you can gain the insight from fellow associates to get a new project completed.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You can pay bills today which have been worrying you for some time and thereby you will have one less thing on your mind. Do whatever your mate desires later this evening and you can reduce a difficult situation.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Have a

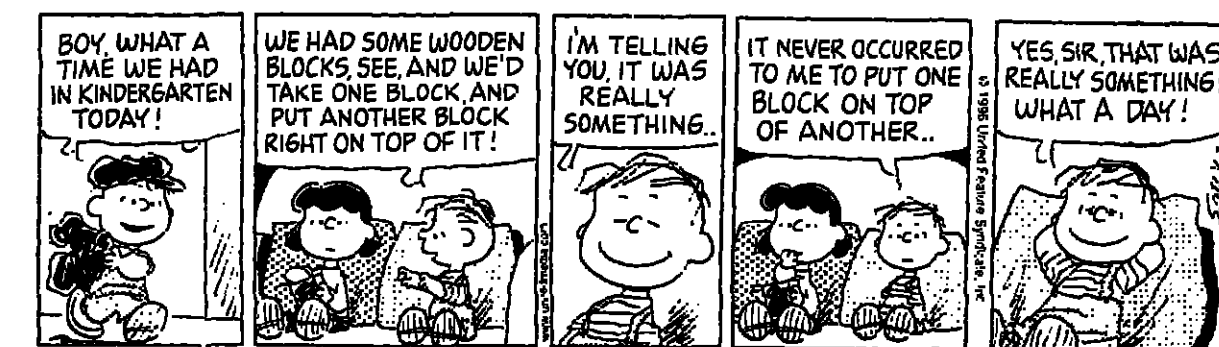
meeting today with fellow associates and plan anew enterprise wisely so that it can meet with success. Later tonight you will be able to consult with a bigwig and discuss what course of action will be most effective.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You can get a whole pile of career activities behind you today if you apply yourself seriously and do whatever is required. Take time later this evening for your friends and have a wonderful time together.

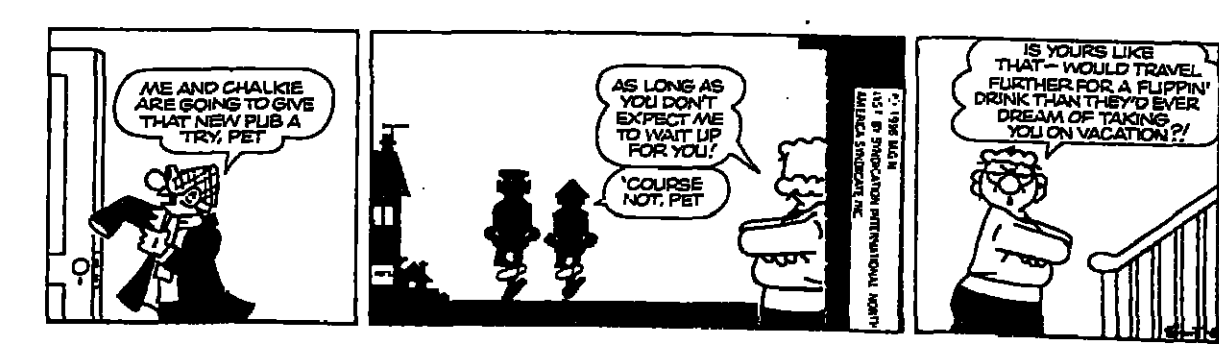
PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Become more romantic today with your beloved and the evening can be a highly pleasurable time together. This is a good time for you to stay home and just relax and allow the tension of career activities to dissolve away.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon.

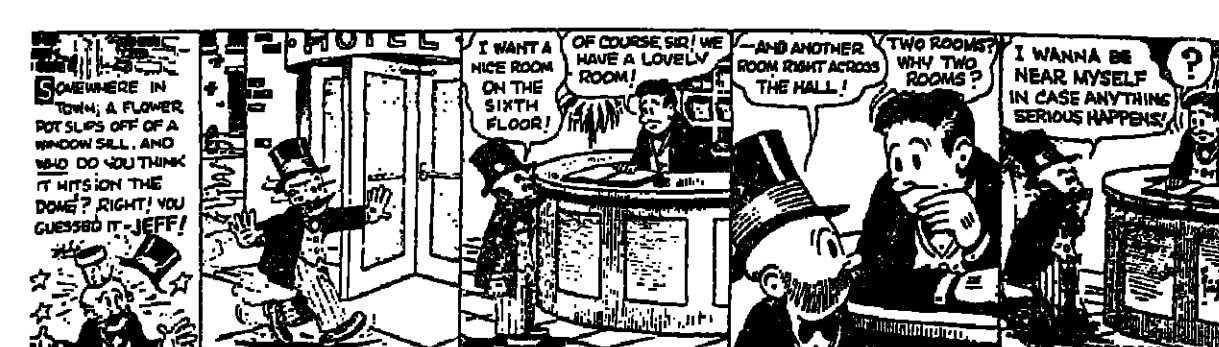
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Family matters need your attention today, so proceed with a cautious attitude. Have guests in later this evening who can do something nice for you and loved ones and make them feel very welcome.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) This is a good day to see persons who are close to your home and deal with neighborhood businesses more. Later this evening will be good to gain the assistance of knowledgeable people for your career activities.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Monetary affairs are vital today, so discuss your options with your loved ones and gain their advice. Your good judgement can easily increase your abundance which will make your mate quite appreciative.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You are highly magnetic at this time and you can acquire almost anything you want if you are willing to put in enough effort. Later this evening you can get together with close friends and have fun together.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Show your devotion today to your love quietly and you can get excellent rewards. Show your will power, also to handle any adverse condition which comes in your direction which will make you successful.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can get ahead faster today via the good auspices of persons you know who are sentimental. Show your appreciation to a bigwig for the assistance on any career activities and you can gain prosperity.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a good day today to be out in public and make a fine impression on others who come in your direction. Show some talent to a prominent person and you can be quite successful from he or she noticing your abilities.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) New obtainable opportunities are coming your way today, so seize as many of them as you can. Later this evening will be good for you to meet with fellow associates and make a plan of action to completed new projects.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your love for your mate is best expressed in tangible ways today, so do something special for he or she and this will be well received. Meet your responsibilities concerning your career activities later this evening and be successful.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Those you want to deal with are highly emotional today, so keep out their way if there are any difficulties. Wear a big smile later this evening and the world is your oyster, so make the best of every opportunities.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is an ideal day today to add colour and charm to your surrounding, which will make those in your residence very happy. Have a heart-to-heart talk with a fellow associate and try to resolve any difficulties which are present.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You can have much luck today connected with any amusement plans you have made. This could make you more popular also in the eyes of those in authority, so make every effort to gain recognition from him or her.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Amman Chamber of Commerce to host Iraqi trade minister

**** THE AMMAN** Chamber of Industry will Sunday host Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Mahdi Saleh who will brief the chamber members on the latest developments in the Iraqi economic arena after Iraq agreed to a United Nations formula on selling Iraqi oil for food and medicine. The Iraqi minister will deal with the mechanism for carrying out the memo of understanding to be signed between Iraq and the U.N. on the oil-for-food agreement and means of inviting food and medicine supply tenders. The chamber has stayed in close contact with Iraq during the Gulf crisis. In the beginning of November, a large delegation representing the chamber visited Iraq to attend the opening of the Baghdad International Fair. During its stay in Baghdad, the delegation members held talks with the ministers of commerce, industry and minerals, health, finance, oil and agriculture as well as the governor of the Iraqi Central Bank. The talks focused on means of enhancing bilateral relations (Al Ra'i & Al Dustour).

Jordan National Bank, Business Bank to merge

**** INFORMED SOURCES** said an announcement about the merger of the Jordan National Bank and the Business Bank is expected to be made before the end of this year. The sources said the new merged bank, to carry the name of the Jordan National Bank, will have a capital of JD 40-44 million. A government committee following up the merger procedures will send its report to the minister of industry and trade before mid-December to pave the way for holding meetings for the two banks' shareholders who will approve the merger (Al Aswaj).

Jordanian industrial fair to be held in Muscat

**** THE MINISTRY** of Industry and Trade was informed that the Omani government has agreed to stage a Jordanian Industrial Fair in Muscat in the period Jan. 25-30, 1997. Commercial Attaché at the Jordanian Embassy in Muscat Lu'ay Ayyoub said a large number of companies manufacturing various products are expected to take part in the fair. Mr. Ayyoub said he was optimistic about the success of the fair since Jordanian products are in demand in the Omani market. Mr. Ayyoub added that this fair will enable Jordanian businesses to establish contacts with Omani counterparts and will acquaint the Omani public with various Jordanian products. He said Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb is expected to attend the fair, which will include lectures and seminars illuminating Jordanian industries.

The Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation (JEDCC), meanwhile, announced that it started receiving applications from Jordanian industries willing to participate in the fair. JEDCC Director General Mohammad Halaiqa said participants in the fair have the option of registering only as exhibitors or can in addition sell products to visitors of the fair (Al Dustour & Al Ra'i).

Minister against high taxes on imported produce

**** MINISTER OF** Supply Munir Sober expressed his objection to imposing high taxes and tariffs on imported fruits and vegetables. At a meeting with a delegation representing the Jordan Agricultural Engineers Association, Mr. Sober said he was keen to protect local produce, but without harming the interests of consumers. He called for organizing the agricultural production process, saying there should be a balance between supply and demand (Al Dustour).

Solidere raises \$77 million through London flotation

LONDON (AFP) — Lebanon's largest real estate company, Solidere, has raised \$77.05 million through sale of depository certificates to international investors, the London Stock Exchange said on Wednesday.

The company, a \$1.8-billion joint stock firm charged with rebuilding war-ravaged Beirut, issued 6.7 million global depository receipts (GDRs) on the London Stock Exchange at an offer price of \$11.50 each.

In the first few hours of official trading on Wednesday, the price of Solidere GDRs was being quoted as high as \$11.70.

GDRs are certificates that give the right to shares in foreign companies, mainly from emerging markets, which wish to raise funds in London without listing part of their share capital directly on the stock exchange.

Each Solidere a share corresponds to 10 GDRs.

The company is the first Lebanese group to issue GDRs on the London bourse, but there are already a few firms from Lebanon which have full stock market listings in London.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri is a shareholder in Solidere and is the driving force behind the giant project to rebuild Beirut city centre, in the aftermath of the 1975-1990 civil war.

Merrill Lynch is the lead manager for the issue launched in cooperation with Paribas Capital Markets, ING Barings, Robert Fleming and Union Bank of Switzerland.

Solidere shares, launched at \$100 at the company's creation in 1994, are divided in two categories: 11.7 million property shares (a) and 6.5 million cash shares (b).

Sudan to compensate BCCI depositors

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — The Sudanese Central Bank has agreed to repay 10,000 depositors who lost money in the 1991 Bank of Credit and Commerce scandal, a senior official said.

Abdullah Hassan Ahmad, governor of the central bank, said depositors who had money in the local currency would be paid immediately upon presenting their claims.

Those who had hard currency deposits will receive 50 per cent of their money in Sudanese pounds. The remainder will be paid when

international liquidators decide on the percentage depositors should receive.

It was unclear how much money would be repaid.

A year after the Bank of Credit and Commerce collapsed, the central bank had allowed 19 per cent of the deposits to be distributed to the bank's clients. The governor said those who received the 19 per cent will have that amount raised to 50 per cent.

Regulators closed BCCI in July 1991, leaving claims of about \$10 billion.

Saudi prince buys Paris George V Hotel

LONDON (AFP) — Billionaire Saudi Prince Al Walid bin Talal Al Saud said on Wednesday that he had agreed to buy the luxury George V Hotel in Paris for \$104 million (\$170.6 million) from Britain's Granada Group.

This is the second palace in the exclusive group of hotels, which Granada acquired in a fiercely-fought \$6 billion hostile takeover of the Forte Hotel empire in January 1996, to be sold.

The Saudi prince, a nephew of King Fahd, started a company in June with U.S. pop superstar Michael

Jackson called Kingdom Entertainment, to invest in amusement parks, catering, television shows and movies.

Prince Al Walid, who owns 25 per cent of Disneyland Paris, also holds significant shares of U.S. banking firm Citicorp, the Four Seasons international hotel chain, the London real-estate development Canary Wharf, department store chain Saks Fifth Avenue, Mediastar — the Italian media empire of Silvio Berlusconi — and the ART Arab satellite television channel.

Shares fall on Baghdad stock exchange on oil news

BAGHDAD (R) — The soaring value of Iraq's dinar currency after agreement on an oil-for-food deal has led to a slump on Baghdad's nascent stock exchange with investors preferring to hold cash, brokers said on Wednesday.

Baghdad's three-year-old bourse is open for business twice a week — on Saturday and Tuesday. The number of companies registered has climbed to 95 from 60 a year ago.

"Saturday's session ended in less than half-an-hour. Most investors are waiting for some form of stability in currency to resume business again," said one broker.

Shares of only 31 companies were traded on Saturday with some 700,000 shares sold fetching 7.5 million dinars, said the broker.

On Tuesday, brokers said, business picked up with more than 17 million shares traded.

The acceptance last month by Iraq of U.N. terms for the implementation of the deal has strengthened the dinar, which on Wednesday traded at 600 to the U.S. dollar from 1,650 before the deal was sealed.

Most popular shares were those of industrial firms. They ranged from 50-70 dinars, about 10 U.S. cents each.

"Industrial companies lost about one third of their value on the stock market on the oil news. Others shed at least two thirds," said another broker.

"Like other commodities shares lose value when currency soars," he said.

After Iraq's acceptance of the U.N. terms for partial oil sales prices have plunged in Baghdad bazaars.

Only Iraqis are allowed to trade on the bourse which

operates in a small hall. On the walls are white boards for each company listed. Middlemen use pens to mark prices and every new deal struck during the day.

Clerks sit in a booth punching trades on a small computer. Two screens, hung from the roof, give investors information about the 10 latest deals. They cannot retrieve the data.

Those wishing to buy and sell stand behind a glass wall and produce small pieces of paper on which they write their prices and show them to middlemen inside the hall.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 04/12/1996

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
250,500	205,000	ARAB BANK	14.2	1.35	3	340	36260	259.00	259.00
1,250	880	MID-EAST INV. BK.	69.0	0.00	16	11950	12548	1.06	1.05
5,250	4,250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.6	2.44	11	4250	19975	4.70	4.70
3,040	2,440	JOR. POSTAL BANK	18.1	2.2	14	42799	103715	2.50	2.50
1,200	880	JOR. GULF BANK	6.1	6.50	26	17200	17772	1.04	1.03
4,180	3,410	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.9	2.50	9	1975	7367	3.76	3.73
3,380	1,800	BEIT AL MAL (BETRA)	7	5.50	2	350	551	1.86	1.86
8,850	4,450	ARAB BANKING CO.	26.6	0.00	2	200	1030	4.90	5.15
1,590	1,000	PHILADELPHIA BK.	9	0.00	6	1843	2296	1.27	1.24
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 195.97	CHNG: -0.12	85	79707	201624		
2,910	1,830	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.4	10.47	3	950	1815	1.92	1.91
2,320	1,900	HOLY LAND INSUR.	6.3	9.00	2	147	308	2.10	2.10
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 117.39	CHNG: -0.05	5	1097	2123		
1,900	1,450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	12.1	6.90	46	81660	144326	1.79	1.74
2,800	2,090	SHIPPING LINES	10.5	0.00	2	1000	2500	2.60	2.50
1,960	1,080	NATL. PORTFOLIO	30.1	0.00	36	24000	30488	1.31	1.26
800	140	KACH. COP. RECY. MATN.	9	0.00	1	900	275	5.58	5.55
3,720	3,130	ARAB TMTL. INV. EDUC.	14.2	5.56	5	750	2712	3.60	3.60
1,270	980	ZARFA EDUCATION	9	0.00	9	1310	1310	1.06	1.06
2,430	1,690	UNIFIED CO.	9.9	5.32	19	10700	19951	1.89	1.88
1,200	820	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	1	500	455	92	91
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 113.29	CHNG: -0.59	120	131508	213835		
26,620	18,350	JOR. TOBACCO & CIG.	14.9	4.05	1	100	1880	19.00	18.50
3,770	3,060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	29.6	2.81	60	2847	140735	3.49	3.56
7,550	7,210	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	34.0	0.00	11	37720	118947	3.15	3.16
5,960	4,780	ARAB POTASH CO.	17.6	2.45	7	1700	9866	5.80	5.80
10,550	8,720	JOR. PETROL. REFINARY	9.5	8.51	16	11324	106388	9.32	9.48
3,710	1,450	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGR.	30.1	0.00	2	130	287	1.21	1.24
4,870	3,040	ARAB PHARM. MARF.	20.0	5.49	77	35970	130962	3.62	3.64
2,400	1,570	JOR. PIPES MANFACT.	8.9	7.50	3	450	722	1.61	1.60
2,350	1,380	ARAB INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	2	350	497	1.48	1.42
8,000	4,250	DAR ALDAWA DV. INV.	13.6	4.02	18	16700	83011	5.01	4.97
5,800	3,130	ARAB ALUM. IND.	8.7	8.57	5	850	2975	3.50	3.50
960	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	92	194100	124419	63	64
1,150	630	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	8.1	8.70	1	850	1012	1.19	1.19
1,090	540	NATIONAL INDUS.	9.2	9.88	22	9400	5810	62	62
1,840	930	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	46	22100	24777	1.11	1.13
1,150	780	JOR. ROPEWORK INDUS.	9	0.00	5	3200	2700	85	85
3,550	2,280	UNIV. CHEM. INDUS.	72.7	0.00	9	2050	5638	2.75	2.75
4,250	2,130	NATL. CABLE WIRE-MFAC	14.7	0.00	2	500	1210	2.42	2.42
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 115.75	CHNG: -0.44	710	614929	1098514		
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 153.70	CHNG: -0.05	920	827241	1516086		
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 04/12/1996									
790	440	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	22.1	0.00	8	4750	2644	56	55
800	510	JOR. TRADE FAE.	14.9	0.00	7	4250	2378	3.49	3.56
950	480	NATL. COMMER. CENTERS	9	0.00	3	2250	1248	57	55
1,500	1,050	ZARA FOR INVESTMENT	27.7	0.00	3	30000	42000	1.40	1.40
1,930	700	UNION INV. SDP	69.8	0.00	30	125200	28906	74	73
1,110	370	ARAB TMT. INVEST.	66	0.00	66	124650	58566	45	47
950	690	AL-DAWLIYAH 75%	15.8	0.00	6	7850	3533	69	70
1,640	340	JOR. INDUS. MATCH-JENCO	9	0.00	2	1250	900	40	40
1,150	630	UNIV. METALS	8	0.00	1	1000	610	63	63
1,860	510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	11	4141	2781	66	67
1,760	1,300	NATL. CHLOINSE	9	0.00	1	1200	1704	1.42	1.42
1,150	630	UNIV. METALS TRD.	8	0.00	10	14009	7011	63	62
1,000	520	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	14	16650	9760	59	59
1,100	400	NATL. MULT. ENG. HAMICO	9	0.00	24	50900	25959	49	51
1,150	430	NAYKAN DIES & MOULDS	9	0.00	36	58723	26917	1169	51
1,680	720	JORDAN STEEL	9	0.00	1	1000	760	760	760
1,330	1,020	UNION TOBACCO 75%	9	0.00	11	3600	2981	1.10	1.08
1,840	570	RADI PHARM. 65%	9	0.00	25	71300	20983	63	64
1,300	830	UNIV. ENG.	28.3	0.00	36	58723	26917	1169	51
1,430	760	INDS. CERAMIC	9	0.00	26	63650	54162	84	86
1,630	360	I. TEXTILE MANUF.	9	0.00	1	5000	76	36	38
900	180	REAL ESTATE P. CONV.	9	0.00	1	5000	29500	58	59
1,500	530	MID-EAST COMPLEX	8.2	0.00	7	8250	576	71	70
GRAND TOTAL					301	647011	330008		

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Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.
TUDIA
UPPYP
TORRCE
IMSURT
Answer here: TO (Answers Monday)
Yesterday's Jumbles: BISON STUNG ENOUGH PETITE
Answer: This is what a mirage is - A SIGHT UNSEEN

1st division basketball playoffs begin tonight

Women's tourney continues as Ahli face Jazireh

By Aleen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — For the first time in Jordanian basketball, fans will get to watch playoffs which group the country's top four teams in two-rounds to determine this year's basketball champion.

The first of Thursday's playoff matches pit Al Orthodoxy who topped the standings after the first round against Al Jazireh in Irbid. However, Al Ahli's match against Al Jazireh in Amman will be a match to watch.

The result of the encounter at the Sports Palace is very crucial, and based on first round results, is expected to be a fight for runner-up position.

Al Ahli came back from an 11-point deficit to win their first round encounter against Al Jazireh 63-60. They then lost 83-63 to Al Orthodoxy making it clear that they are in no position

to get back the title they won in 90, 92, 93, and 94 as their younger lineup clearly miss the efforts of three of the Kingdom's top stars — Marwan Ma'touq, Youssef Zaghoul and Naser Bushnaq.

Titleholders Al Orthodoxy who had an undisputed reign over the country's basketball scene from 1976-1989 are favoured to keep their title led by veteran Hilal Barakat and teammates Fadi Saqqa and Naser Bassam.

Like last year, Al Jazireh have demonstrated that they are ready to move from third place and have made the competition a three-way

race. However, they have shown an inconsistent form as they lost their grip in the Ahli match, lost to Al Orthodoxy 95-83 and had a hard time against Al Jazireh before winning 66-61.

Al Jazireh have shown an improved form although their only wins were over fifth and sixth placed teams — 103-87 over Al Yarmouk and 94-65 over Al Watani.

Both last placed teams will be playing a deciding round of their own. The loser will automatically be relegated while the winner will play another round with second division runner-up — Al Jeel — to determine who gets to keep

their place in the first division.

Thursday's match at the Sports Palace will be preceded by the second of the women's All-Star matches at 4:15.

In the inaugural match the Babiche team beat Today 46-31.

The women's tourney groups over 34 of the Kingdom's junior and senior women's national teams players and comes amidst the federation's preparations to regroup the women's national team for a possible participation in the 17th Asian Basketball Championship in Bangkok April 27, 1997.

Schedule of first round of playoffs

Thursday 5/12	Women's All-Star (Sports Palace)	4:15 p.m.
	Jazireh - Orthodoxy (Al Hassan court)	6:15 p.m.
Sunday 8/12	Ahli - Jazireh (Sports Palace)	6:15 p.m.
	Orthodoxy-Jazireh (Sports Palace)	6:15 p.m.
Thursday 12/12	Jazireh - Ahli (Al Hassan court)	6:15 p.m.
	Women's final (Sports Palace)	4:15 p.m.
	Jazireh - Ahli (Al Hassan court)	6:15 p.m.
	Orthodoxy - Ahli (Sports Palace)	6:15 p.m.

UEFA Cup roundup

Broendby win at Karlsruhe to reach last eight

LONDON (AP) — Broendby produced an amazing turnaround in the UEFA Cup Tuesday, wiping out Karlsruhe's 3-1 victory over Denmark to win 5-0 in Germany and reach the last eight.

The Danes surprisingly join inter Milan, Newcastle, Monaco, Tenerife, Valencia, Schalke and Anderlecht in the quarterfinal.

Despite the absence of injured international forward Thomas Haessler, the Karlsruhe appeared to be coasting into the quarterfinal until just before half time. Ruben Bagger fired the Danes ahead in the 42nd minute and then Dan Eggen made it 2-0 and 3-3 overall.

That put Broendby ahead on the basis of away goals if the game had ended that way. But the confused Karlsruhe defence fell apart and the Danes scored three more with two from Peter Moeller and one by Marc Wilmont.

Spanish club Tenerife

looked on its way to match Broendby's score at the home of powerful Dutch club Feyenoord, racing into a 4-0 lead in Rotterdam before winning 4-2.

After a goal-less first leg, those Tenerife goals by Felipe Fernandez, Juanele (two) and Pablo Paz put the Spaniards into the last eight before Feyenoord hit back through Argentine midfielder Pablo Sanchez and Henk Vos in the last seven minutes.

Monaco, already 3-0 up from the home leg, was another on the road winner, beating Hamburg 2-0 for an overall shutout.

Victor Ikpeba, one of Nigeria's victorious Olympic team, netted the first after 63 minutes and Ali Benarbia fired home a last minute penalty.

Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla scored twice in the last nine minutes to put Newcastle into the last eight after a 2-0 victory over French club Metz.

The goals gave

Newcastle a 3-1 overall triumph after Metz had missed several clear chances. Asprilla wound up being carried off the field with a hamstring injury and also earned a yellow card for over-celebrating his first goal and that means the Colombian missed the quarterfinal.

Belgian forward Marc Wilmont set up the 2-0 victory that put Schalke into the quarterfinal of the European competition for the first time in 23 years and ousted his countrymen from club Brugge.

Wilmont's pass set up Martin Max for a ninth minute goal that gave Schalke the lead and put the teams level overall after Brugge's 2-1 first leg lead. Schalke looked all set to go through on the away goals rule until Wilmont made sure with a cross that enabled Yuri Mulder to head a second goal in the final minute.

While Wilmont's assists ousted a Belgian team, Swedish playmaker Par Zetterberg created the downfall of his countrymen

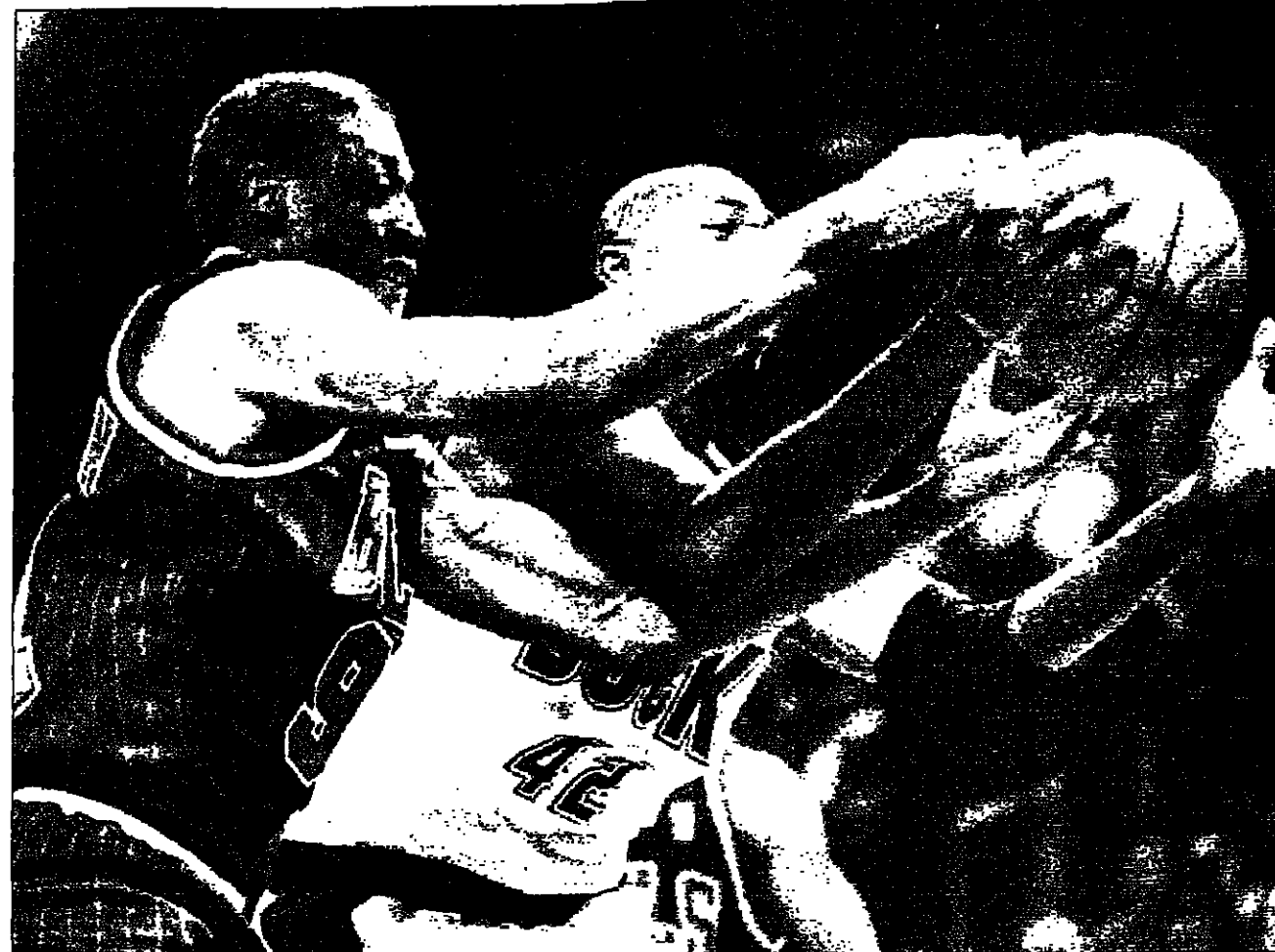
from Helsingborg by setting up the only goal for Anderlecht's Johan Walem. That strike after a goal-less first leg meant that, this time, the Belgian team advanced.

Inter Milan coasted into the last eight with a 2-0 win at Boavista, which had lost the first leg 5-1.

French forward Youri Djorkaeff fired home a 12th minute penalty and England's Paul Ince added the second in the 66th minute.

Valencia's 3-1 lead from the first leg held up after a 2-2 tie with Besiktas in Istanbul.

Besiktas' Serdar Toprakcpe opened the scoring in the 17th minute but Argentine forward Claudio Lopez leveled seven minutes later. The other goals also came before half time. Croatian forward Goran Vlaovic giving the Spanish club the lead but Oktay Derelioğlu driving home a penalty two minutes later.



Chicago Bulls forward Dennis Rodman steals the ball away from Milwaukee Bucks forward Vin Baker on the defensive end of the court in the first quarter at the Bradley Centre in Milwaukee December 3. Chicago defeated Milwaukee 107-104 (Reuters photo)

Danilovic leads Heat in romp over Knicks

NEW YORK (R) — Sasha Danilovic led the Miami Heat hot shots with a sizzling 7-for-7 from 3-point range Tuesday as Miami won their team-record eighth straight game, routing the stumbling New York Knicks 99-75.

Danilovic scored all 21 of his points from behind the 3-point arc and Dan Majerle scored 22 points for the Heat, who increased their lead to three games over the Knicks in the Atlantic Division in winning their seventh straight road game.

"We were humbled at home," said Knicks coach Jeff Van Gundy, whose team is now just 4-4 at Madison Square Garden. "Beaten by a team in all facets."

"I was just open tonight, they gave me the ball at the right time and I just made the shots. I am just playing the same game I always play," said Danilovic, a 26-year-old Serbian in his second season with Miami (13-4).

It was Heat coach Pat Riley's first win at Madison Square Garden since resigning as Knicks coach in 1995. He was soundly booed as he was last season when Miami lost twice in New York.

Allan Houston had 14 points and Larry Johnson and Patrick Ewing added 12 apiece for the Knicks (9-6), who never led.

"Quite frankly, I just felt that tonight's game, we just didn't bring a competitive spirit," Knicks forward Buck Williams said. "We seemed to be preoccupied with individual things and not as a team."

"This was not a statement game," Majerle said. "We just wanted to play our game and we did a great job defensively."

"We're just not hungry," said Knicks forward Charles Oakley. "If we don't make it happen soon, we're going to make a fool out of ourselves."

In Milwaukee, Michael Jordan scored 40 points and unheralded Jason Caffey keyed a pivotal fourth-quarter run with six points as the Chicago Bulls beat the Bucks 107-104.

Jordan recorded his 148th career game of 40-plus points as the Bulls used a 19-5 run to turn an 80-80 tie into a 14-point lead with four minutes to play.

Caffey, who scored 12 points, sparked the run by opening the quarter with a

dunk and had the first six points of the period for Chicago (16-1).

Glenn Robinson led Milwaukee (8-8) with 21 points and Sherman Douglas and Vin Baker had 20 apiece. "We are very disappointed," Baker said. "We honestly feel that we should have won this game."

In Portland, Reggie Miller scored 32 points and put Indiana ahead for good as the Pacers defeated the Portland Trail Blazers 98-93 in overtime for their first three-game winning streak of the season.

Miller's three-pointer gave the Pacers (6-8) a 90-87 lead with 2:56 left in the extra period. Miller was 10-for-20 from the field, including 5-of-9 from behind the arc.

Kenny Anderson scored 29 points and Clifford Robinson added 23 for the Trail Blazers (10-8), who lost for just the third time in nine games.

In Los Angeles, Shaquille O'Neal scored 32 points, including four in the final 63 seconds, and had 14 rebounds to lead the Lakers to a 110-106 win over the Seattle SuperSonics in a matchup of the Pacific Division's top two teams.

Nick Van Exel scored 16 of his 18 points in the second half. Byron Scott added 12 and Eddie Jones had 15 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for Los Angeles (13-6), which pulled within one game of first-place Seattle (14-5).

Detlef Schrempf matched his season high with 27 points and Gary Payton added 24 points and six assists for Seattle. Shawn Kemp had 22 and 14 rebounds before fouling out with 4:12 left.

In Snaheim, Loy Vaught scored 23 points and pulled down 15 rebounds, including a key jumper with 22 seconds remaining, as the Los Angeles Clippers snapped a six-game losing streak with a 96-89 victory over the Charlotte Hornets.

Terry Dehere scored 25 points to lead the Clippers, who snapped a three-game home losing streak with their first win since November 20.

At Golden State, Latrell Sprewell scored 10 of his 28 points over the final 5:22 of the first half as the Golden State Warriors raced to an early lead and never trailed, handing the Denver Nuggets their fourth straight loss 114-99.

NBA STANDINGS

By The Associated Press

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Miami	13	4	.765	-
Orlando	8	5	.615	3
New York	9	6	.600	3
Philadelphia	7	8	.467	5
Washington	7	8	.467	5
Boston	4	11	.267	8
New Jersey	3	9	.250	7 1-2

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Chicago	16	1	.941	-
Detroit	12	3	.800	3
Cleveland	10	5	.667	5
Atlanta	10	7	.588	6
Charlotte	8	8	.500	7 1-2
Milwaukee	8	8	.500	7 1-2
Indiana	6	8	.429	8 1-2
Toronto	5	11	.313	10 1-2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Houston	15	2	.882	-
Utah	13	2	.867	1
Minnesota	7	9	.438	7 1-2
Dallas	5	10	.333	9
Denver	5	13	.278	10 1-2
San Antonio	2	13	.133	12
Vancouver	2	15	.118	13

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Seattle	14	5	.737	-
L.A. Lakers	13	6	.684	1
Portland	10	8	.556	3 1-2
L.A. Clippers	7	10	.412	6
Golden State	6	11	.353	7
Sacramento	6	12	.333	7 1-2
Phoenix	1	14	.067	11

NBA RESULTS

Atlanta	105	Boston	95
Cleveland	93	Toronto	74
Sacramento	96	Minnesota	89
Miami	99	New York	75
Chicago	107	Milwaukee	104
Indiana	98	Portland	93 (OT)
Golden State	114	Denver	99
LA Clippers	96	Charlotte	89
LA Lakers	110	Seattle	106

Mark Price added 19 points and Joe Smith had 18 for the Warriors. Brooks Thompson had 23 points for Denver.

In Cleveland, Terrell Brandon scored 18 points and Mark West had six in an early 15-0 run as the Cleveland Cavaliers cruised to a 93-74 victory over the Toronto Raptors.

Bob Sura added 15 points for the Cavaliers, who allowed less than 80 points for the seventh time in 15 games this season. Doug Christie and Acie Earl scored 16 points apiece for the Raptors.

At Minnesota, Mitch Richmond scored 29 points and hit key 3-pointers in two second-half runs to pro-

pel the Sacramento Kings to a 96-89 win over the Minnesota Timberwolves. Tom Gugliotta scored 22 points for Minnesota, which was denied in its bid to reach the .500 mark.

In Atlanta, Dikembe Mutombo had 21 points, 14 rebounds and nine blocks and Steve Smith added 20 points to lead the Hawks to a 105-95 win over the Boston Celtics.

Christian Laettner had 15 points for the Hawks, who have won five of their last six. Dana Barros scored 24 points and hit 6-of-7 from three-point range for Boston, who have lost three straight and five of seven.

"We played hard, we just didn't play smart," Barros said.

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Seles to defend Sydney title

SYDNEY (R) — Joint world No. 2 Monica Seles will begin preparations for the defence of her Australian open tennis title in mid-January at the Sydney international a week earlier, tournament officials announced on Wednesday.

Seles will head a field of 13 of the top 20-ranked women at the January 5-11 Sydney tournament, including joint world number two Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain and rising Swiss teenager Martina Hingis, before moving on to Melbourne the following week for the start of the Australian Open.

Lindsay Davenport, beaten in three sets by fellow American Seles in last year's final, will also return to Sydney, tournament director Barry Masters said in a statement.

"I am absolutely delighted with this top class entry," Masters said.

Seles took the Sydney title last year in her first appearance and went on to take the Australian Open title in Melbourne two weeks later.



Monica Seles

It was her first Grand Slam win since she was stabbed by an obsessed

Steffi Graf fan in Hamburg in April 1993.

West Ham insist Futre has a future

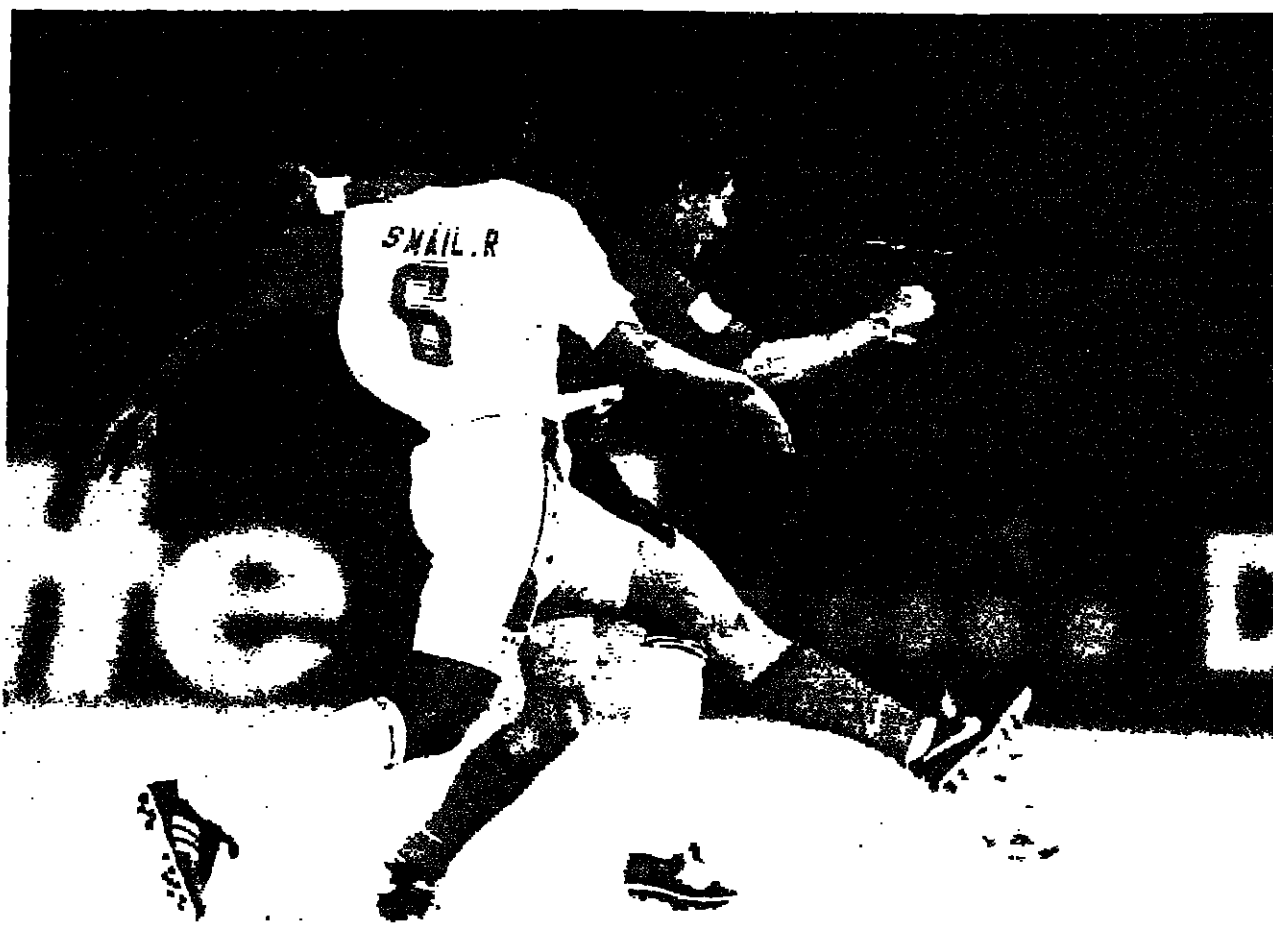
LONDON (R) — West Ham have done a U-turn on their plans to give injury-plagued Portuguese striker Paulo Futre his marching orders from Upton Park.

Manager Harry Redknapp announced at the weekend he was about to tell Futre he would have to leave because his fitness has not reached the required level for the rigours of the English Premier League.

But now Futre, who joined West Ham on a free transfer from AC Milan in the close season, is being given one more chance after further consultation with medical experts.

"I am happy with that," manager Harry Redknapp said Tuesday. "We will continue to see how it goes because it has been proved that, if fully fit, Paulo is a top-class player."

Futre has made only four starts for West Ham plus four appearances as a substitute. He has yet to score.



South Korean striker Sun Hong-Hwang (right) scores the first goal in the 11th Asia Cup in Abu Dhabi's Zayed Sport City stadium, as R. Ismail of United Arab Emirates fails to stop him, December 4. The game ended in a 1-1 draw (Reuters photo)

Iran, South Korea dominate Asia Cup

ABU DHABI (AP) — Asia's premier soccer tournament, the Asia cup, has been dominated by Iran and South Korea, which have won five of the ten titles during the tournament's 40-year history. A total of 12 teams are taking part in the tournament starting Wednesday.

Following is a list of the year, venue, winner, runner-up and result of the final of each of the previous 10 championships:

Year	Host	Winner	Runner-up	Result
1956	Hong Kong	South Korea	Israel	round robin
1960	South Korea	South Korea	Israel	round robin
1964	Israel	Israel	India	round robin
1968	Iran	Iran	Burma	round robin
1972	Thailand	Iran	South Korea	round robin
1976	Iran	Iran	Kuwait	2-1
1980	Kuwait	Kuwait	South Korea	1-0
1984	Singapore	Saudi Arabia	China	3-0
1988	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	South Korea	2-0
1992	Japan	Japan	Saudi Arabia	4-3 (penalties)

Boro now three months without a league win

LONDON (AFP) — Middlesbrough's miserable league run was extended to 10 matches without victory Tuesday as Bryan Robson's expensively-assembled under-achievers slumped to a 2-0 home defeat to Leicester.

Goals either side of half-time from Foxes' top scorer Steve Claridge and Muzzy Izet sent the Premiership newcomers up to 12th place and brought a chorus of disapproval echoing around teesside from 29,709 disgruntled Boro supporters.

"They have only won seven of their last 39 Premiership matches, losing 22 of them and conceding 28 goals in 16 league matches this season — more than any other Premiership club except fellow strugglers Southampton."

With Emerson back in Brazil for private reasons again and fellow Brazilian Juninho sidelined by an ankle injury, Boro boss Bryan Robson saw the side he has assembled at a cost of more than 20 million pounds (\$30million) dismantled by Leicester's assortment of virtual unknowns.

The anxiety of the home crowd desperate to see their heroes secure their first home league win since September 7 soon transferred itself to the Boro players.

Danish striker Mikkel Beck had a great chance to settle the nerves in the third minute when he burst clear onto an astute Robbie Mus-



Newcastle United soccer star Faustino Asprilla (right) is held back by Metz Robert Pires (left) (Reuters photo)

toe pass, but the Danish striker allowed the ball to run away from him at the vital moment and Kasey Keller pounced to save.

But Leicester had the better of the opening

industry.

The visitors went ahead when Northern Ireland midfielder Neil Lennon crossed from the right for veteran striker Claridge to head past Garry Walsh from six yards to chalk up his sixth goal of the season.

And Leicester were celebrating a second goal a minute after the restart.

Garry Parker rolled a short free-kick sideways and Izet sent a powerful shot arrowing past Walsh's left hand from the left angle of the penalty area.

Newcastle manager Kevin Keegan later revealed he was about to substitute Asprilla just minutes before the Colombian struck two late goals but opted instead to rest David Ginola, who was injured.

"I was toying between him and David and David then shouted over and said 'my hamstring is a bit tight'...so yes, great management," joked Keegan.

The goals came as a great relief to Keegan after a nervous evening.

"It was one of those nights when we couldn't put together three passes let alone score a goal," he said.

"It needed something like that because we were suffering from a lack of confidence and could not seem to do the things that we are so good at."

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WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HESCH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - As South, vulnerable, you bid:

4-Valid 0A 10 5 4 0AK Q 10 3 AK 9 4 3

The bidding has proceeded:

10- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10- Pass 2- Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 2 - As South, vulnerable, you bid:

4-Valid 0A 10 5 4 0AK Q 10 3 AK 9 4 3

The bidding has proceeded:

10- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10- Pass 1- Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 3 - As South, vulnerable, you bid:

4-Valid 0A 10 5 4 0AK Q 10 3 AK 9 4 3

The bidding has proceeded:

10- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10- Pass 2- Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 4 - As South, vulnerable, you bid:

4-Valid 0A 10 5 4 0AK Q 10 3 AK 9 4 3

The bidding has proceeded:

10- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10- Pass 1- Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 5 - As South, vulnerable, you bid:

4-Valid 0A 10 5 4 0AK Q 10 3 AK 9 4 3

The bidding has proceeded:

10- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10- Pass 2- Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 6 - As South, vulnerable, you bid:

4-Valid 0A 10 5 4 0AK Q 10 3 AK 9 4 3

The bidding has proceeded:

10- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10- Pass 1- Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 7 - As South, vulnerable, you bid:

4-Valid 0A 10 5 4 0AK Q 10 3 AK 9 4 3

The bidding has proceeded:

10- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10- Pass 2- Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 8 - As South, vulnerable, you bid:

4-Valid 0A 10 5 4 0AK Q 10 3 AK 9 4 3

The bidding has proceeded:

10- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10- Pass 1- Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 9 - As South, vulnerable, you bid:

4-Valid 0A 10 5 4 0AK Q 10 3 AK 9 4 3

The bidding has proceeded:

10- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10- Pass 2- Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 10 - As South, vulnerable, you bid:

4-Valid 0A 10 5 4 0AK Q 10 3 AK 9 4 3

The bidding has proceeded:

10- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10- Pass 1- Pass

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West warns Bosnians to stick to Dayton accords

LONDON (R) — The international community warned Bosnia's ethnic leaders on Wednesday to abide by the terms of last year's Dayton peace accord or risk losing vital reconstruction aid.

At the same time the West made clear that while it was ready to commit North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) peacekeepers for another 18 months, those forces would be gradually scaled down over the course of next year as the alliance sought an exit strategy from Bosnia.

British Prime Minister John Major, speaking at the opening of a two-day international conference reviewing 12 months of peace, said that although the Dayton peace agreement had achieved a great deal, much remained to be done.

The conference has been overshadowed by two weeks of mass demonstrations in Belgrade, where students and opposition supporters have staged daily marches against Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, whom they accuse of rigging local elections (see inside).

After blaming Mr. Milosevic for stirring up war in Bosnia in pursuit of Serbian nationalist aims, the West has been forced to rely on the Balkan strongman as a major guarantor of

ROYAL COURT Chief Awn Khasawneh, who is heading the Jordanian delegation to the London conference, addressed the gathering on Wednesday, stressing the need to ensure the unity of Bosnia-Herzegovina and find an appropriate solution to the problem of Bosnian refugees.

The United States and Britain have condemned Serbian authorities for closing down an independent Belgrade radio station which had been covering the demonstrations.

Mr. Major held talks on Wednesday with Bosnia's three co-presidents — Muslim leader Alija Izetbegovic, Bosnian Serb Momcilo Krajisnik and Croat Kresimir Zubak — as the conference attended by 50 foreign ministers opened.

Western officials said they were encouraged by the fact that the three uneasy bedfellows sat at the conference table behind a single "Bosnia-Herzegovina" name-plate.

"None of us at this conference underestimates the task you face. You are rebuilding a nation, only a few months after a bitter

war, with the wounds and divisions not yet healed," Mr. Major said in his opening speech.

"But you were elected by the Bosnian people as their investment in, and commitment to, a brighter future. They have placed their trust in you... This is a heavy responsibility."

Mr. Major said the West would be looking for a series of detailed political undertakings from the Bosnian leaders.

He added: "The international community will in turn undertake to provide substantial further help and resources, both human and financial. But this international help will be conditional on the willingness in Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement all aspects of the peace agreement."

British officials say the Bosnian Muslim, Serbs and Croats are violating Dayton by hampering freedom of movement, preventing refugees from returning home, committing human rights abuses and refusing to hand over indicted war criminals.

Implementation of the peace agreement has largely fallen to the 60,000-strong NATO force, which is due to leave Bosnia this month and be replaced by a slimmed-down force half its size.

(Continued on page 7)



Religious Jews blow silver trumpets during a mass prayer on Wednesday at the western wall of Arab East Jerusalem to invoke God not to allow the handover of parts of Hebron to Palestinian control (Reuters photo)

Ministry says Israeli fair is not its concern; event delayed by 3 weeks

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government on Wednesday rejected opposition calls for the cancellation of an Israeli trade exhibition saying it had no say in the matter because it was organized by the private sector and it had only issued a no-objection certificate to the organizer of the event.

The government statement came shortly after the Israeli embassy here said the organizer, the Jordanian International and National Expo Corporation (JINEC), had decided to postpone the exhibition by nearly three weeks because of the high number of Israeli firms seeking to take part.

The exhibition, first of its kind to be held in Jordan, has drawn protests from Jordanian opposition parties who reject normalisation of relations with Israel. Several professional associations support that view.

Businessmen's associations which do not necessarily reject doing business with the Jewish state have also opposed the plan to hold the fair arguing that the timing was not right, particularly the policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have cast serious doubts over the fate of the peace process.

A statement issued by the Ministry of Industry and Trade on Wednesday said it had received a request in May from JINEC for permission to hold the exhibition. "But the ministry is not empowered to accept or reject the request and, as such, it informed the applicant that the ministry did not object to this request," said the statement, carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The statement said the position adopted by the ministry was in conformity with the trade agreement between Jordan and Israel as well as a Higher Court of

Justice ruling in 1994 saying the Ministry of Industry and Trade did not have the authority to deal with requests for trade fairs.

The Israeli exhibition, if and when held, will be open only to businessmen, it added.

Shalom Touregman, spokesman for the Israeli embassy here, said the exhibition, originally set for Dec. 15-18, will now open on Jan. 6.

"The organizer of the event decided to postpone the event because he wanted more time to accommodate the requests for participation by a very large number of Israeli businesses," he said.

The head of the JINEC, local businessman Fakhri Nasser, was not immediately available for comment. Mr. Nasser said earlier that at least 80 Israeli companies had registered to take

(Continued on page 7)

Ramtha post will continue to be functional, minister tells deputy

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Minister of Interior Awad Khleifat affirmed on Wednesday that the Ramtha border post will remain open for travel from and to Syria and Lebanon.

Speaking at the Lower House of Parliament session, the interior minister said that Jordan and Syria had already agreed on keeping the post open for visitors but did not specify whether trailers and long-haul trucks were also allowed to use the post.

The minister was replying to a question from Deputy Fawwaz Zoubi, who complained about the transfer of the Ramtha post to Jabber Centre, 30 kilometres away. "Tens of thousands of people in the Ramtha district depend on the border post," Deputy Zoubi said. "Huge investments are there and several projects have been planned years ago based on the existence of this post."

The minister reassured the deputy that the two posts were up and running

according to an agreement reached between all sides.

In the question and answer period, another deputy, Hani Masalha, complained that Jordanian farmers were living in wretched conditions and suffering from the sharp decrease in prices of local products. He appealed to the government to reduce imports of agricultural products and limit them to barter trade.

"Prices of agricultural products are dropping down dramatically and malaria is spreading," Deputy Masalha said. "If there are no positive signs in the near future of a solution to the problem, farmers intend to sell their lands."

Minister of Agriculture Mustafa Shneikat said the government was exerting extensive efforts now to increase exports. "About 1800 to 2000 tonnes of products are exported daily to Lebanon, Dubai, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as well as to eastern European countries," Dr. Shneikat said. "We are hoping for

more. However, the main problem that is facing farmers is the weather conditions that have a negative impact on farming."

In a reply to the malaria problem that was raised by the deputy, Minister of Health Aref Bataineh said that the disease has been completely eradicated in Jordan.

"Jordan is totally free of the disease. There might be some individual cases due to (foreign) arrivals in the Kingdom," he said. "We are taking all the necessary measures."

One last problem was raised by Ibrahim Samara Zoubi. He complained that the Greater Irbid project that the government intends to undertake in Irbid and its suburbs will have negative impacts on the city. He said that the project is unfeasible since Irbid's municipal budget is overloaded and could not possibly provide for new projects.

There was no answer from the government to the comment.

Palestinian lawmaker demands release of prisoners

RAMALLAH (Agencies) — The families of Palestinians jailed in Israel should accompany Yasser Arafat on trips abroad to drum up international support for freeing their relatives, a Palestinian legislator said Wednesday.

Responding to public criticism that the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was not doing enough to secure the prisoners' freedom, Hisham Abdul Razek said the families should form a watchdog group to solicit international support.

"This situation in the prisons is very bad. This will deeply affect the peace process," Mr. Abdul Razek said at a news conference.

Mr. Abdul Razek, the PNA's liaison on prisoners held by Israel, himself spent 15 years in an Israeli prison. Palestinians demonstrated in Hebron, Arab East Jerusalem and throughout the West Bank last week to demand the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails.

Palestinians say more than 5,000 Palestinians are still in Israeli jails. Most were convicted of security offenses, but some are administrative detainees being held without trial.

In the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, Israel agreed to release Palestinian prisoners, but did not specify whether some or all would be set free. The releases were later made conditional upon the Palestinians getting tougher on Islamic militants.

On Wednesday, Mr. Abdul Razek said Israel needed to act soon to avoid "an explosion" in the prisons.

Mr. Abdul Razek also called on the Israeli government to release Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas who was arrested in 1989. Sheikh Yassin, a quadriplegic, is serving a life sentence for ordering the killing of informers and Israeli soldiers. Abdul Razek read a plea from the Palestinian prisoners urging international human rights groups to "intervene to save our lives from the slow deaths after we discovered spoiled food given to us in prison."

Hotline discussed

Israeli Police Minister Avigdor Kahalani met for the first time Wednesday with his Palestinian counterpart and proposed setting up a hotline to avoid new outbreaks of fighting between their forces.

"I believe this meeting will develop a very unique relationship between General Yousef and myself," Mr. Kahalani told reporters after his meeting with Palestinian Police Commander Nasser Yousef. "We talked like friends and I believe we should keep a hotline between him and me," said Mr. Kahalani, who as internal security minister runs Israel's police forces under the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.



Fergie has a new interest

NEW YORK (AFP) — Sarah Ferguson has a new love interest — her personal trainer. According to the New York Post, she so missed him while on a U.S. tour to promote her autobiography that she had him flown over from England in a Concorde. The Duchess of York's trainer is Josh Salzman, a 40-year-old American divorcee father of five. Fergie joins the ranks of Madonna and actress Julia Roberts, who also have lost their hearts to their personal trainers.

Pamela Anderson, Lee to reunite

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Baywatch Actress Pamela Anderson and rock drummer Tommy Lee are getting back together, two weeks after she filed for divorce, her publicist Ann Israel said. "I can definitely say they have reconciled," Israel said. Apparently, Anderson's threat of divorce prompted Lee to abandon his wanton behaviour and enter rehabilitation to control his drinking problem.

Sellers' mementoes auctioned off

LONDON (AFP) — The wedding dress Swedish actress Britt Ekland wore when she married British comic actor Peter Sellers after a 15-day courtship in 1964 went under the auctioneer's hammer here Tuesday. The dress — which fetched 518 pounds (\$800) — was sold as part of a collection of Ekland's belongings which included love letters and mementoes of her relationships with the late Peter Sellers and singer Rod Stewart. Ekland, acclaimed as one of the world's most beautiful women, sold the possessions for a total of 88,000 pounds (\$140,000) because she is moving from her Chelsea home in London to Los Angeles to be close to her children. Also up for grabs at Christie's auction house were leather shoes, jewellery and handbags, a brass double bed, and sequined ponchos.

Milan to use candid camera against prostitution

MILAN (AFP) — Authorities in the Italian city of Milan plan to set up a team of police officers-cum-photo-journalists, whose task will be to photograph clients caught in the act of soliciting prostitutes. The municipal council of Milan, northern Italy, which is dominated by the secessionist Northern League, adopted a motion late Tuesday to set up the team. A few days after the picture of the curb crawler is taken, it will be sent to the offender's home, identified from car number plates, where there will be a strong chance that it will be sighted by his family. He will also receive a demand to pay a fine. Milan, which has some one and a half million inhabitants has some 2,500 prostitutes and transvestites, according to estimates by the charitable organisation Caritas. Mayor of Milan Marco Formentini said: "It is a palliative measure, a superficial remedy and I am not yet sure how effective it will be." Depending on the circumstances, offenders will be charged with breach of the highway regulations or of the law on prostitution. Other Italian cities have attempted to introduce similar measures, notably the central city of Florence, but have come up against legal difficulties. To have sex with a prostitute in a car is not a crime providing the car is parked discreetly and there is no breach of public order. In addition there are constitutional difficulties in using this method to identify people flouting the freedom of the individual.

Process launched by Barcelona Declaration is on course — EU officials

By Ghaila Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Despite difficulties in negotiations between Jordan and the European Union (EU) over an association agreement, the EU's representative in Amman says that the results of the Barcelona Declaration were encouraging at both regional and bilateral levels.

In a press conference on Wednesday, Yves Gazzo, head of the delegation of the Commission of the European Communities in Jordan, stressed that the Barcelona process was the only forum in which all countries on the Mediterranean were able to meet for a comprehensive discussion of security in the region.

The Barcelona Declaration, which called for the establishment of Euro-Mediterranean partnerships as well as a free

trade area by the year 2010, was adopted in November 95 bringing together 15 European and 12 Mediterranean countries.

Mr. Gazzo reviewed the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations of the Barcelona Declaration, which aims at security and political cooperation, economic and financial cooperation, as well as cooperation in social, cultural and human affairs.

He added that the EU last year adopted the MEDA programme which allocated a budget of European Currency Units (ECUs) 4.6 billion (\$5.8 billion) in grants for the Mediterranean countries for the year 96-99.

He added that the MEDA programme, of which 90 per cent is implemented at the bilateral level, provides assistance for economic reforms in eligible countries.

Ramon Mestres, economic councillor at the European delegation said the general philosophy of the MEDA programme was to support the economic conditions in the region, support the structural adjustment programmes as well as to support the role of women and the economic and social affairs. The programme, Mr. Mestres added, was also designed to encourage a better regional and cross-border cooperation and support the civil population.

In the case of Jordan, he said, main cooperation areas were identified in July 95.

The EU's "input here is to support all this economic transition period," Mr. Mestres said.

The EU and Jordan have recently signed a financial agreement under which the EU allocated ECU 100 million (\$128 million) in support of Jordan's balance of

payments. A tranche of 60 million ECU has already been dispersed.

Other areas of cooperation between Jordan and the EU are the restructuring of the Jordanian production sector for which a programme for the private sector development was adopted, said Mr. Mestres.

The EU, he added, aims for more active cooperation in the area of human resource development.

At the political and security levels, Mr. Gazzo said, senior officials conducted general meetings this year to define a common area of peace and stability in the region.

The conference also reviewed projects adopted by the Barcelona process some of which are economic cooperation projects, decentralised cooperation programmes, information and

media projects as well as cultural heritage projects.

Europeans regard the MED-STAT programme for statistical cooperation as the most important project under the EU-Mediterranean economic cooperation.

The project, which puts together national statistics with the sum of 20 million ECUs, allows for the launching of joint work and permanent cooperation between 1998 and 1999.

A MEDA democracy programme was initiated this year with a budget of nine million ECUs in a bid to support measures to promote democracy, the rule of law, civil and socio-economic rights and the protection of vulnerable groups.

Sixty projects have been approved in the whole region, the majority of which touched on

human and civil rights, youth and children as well as the media.

A project for the Arab Women Organisation of Jordan was financed by the EU under the MEDA democracy programme to help carry out a democracy for grass roots project designed to fight discrimination on the basis of gender.

The project aims at developing women empowerment with emphasis on human rights issues, ensuring greater participation of women at grassroots level in the 1997 general elections and training women candidates in the skills of lobbying. The project will also encourage political dialogue and the formation of women human rights pressure groups.

This project is the first of six

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